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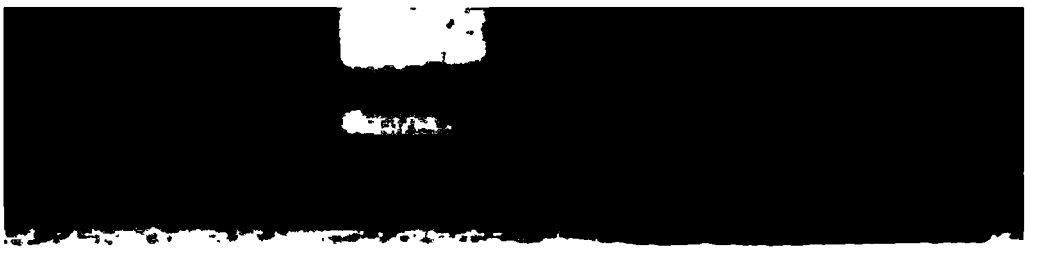

FLORENTINE HISTORY.

Ma quell' ingrato popolo maligno
Che discese di Fiesole ab antico,
E tiene ancor del monte e del macigno.

DANTE, *Inferno*, Canto XV.

E come 'l volger del ciel della luna
Cuopre ed iscuopre i liti senza posa,
Così far di Fiorenza la fortuna:
Perchè non dee parer mirabil cosa
Ciò ch' io dirò degli alti Fiorentini,
Onde la fama nel tempo è nascosa.

DANTE, *Paradiso*, Canto XVI.

FLORENTINE HISTORY,

FROM THE EARLIEST AUTHENTIC RECORDS

TO THE ACCESSION OF

FERDINAND THE THIRD,

GRAND DUKE OF TUSCANY.

BY

HENRY EDWARD NAPIER,

Captain in the Royal Navy, F.R.S.

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ERRATA.

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18 .	3, Note	Luccino .	. Luchino.
74 .	2, „	feel the pain	. feel pain.
176 .	2, „	Vol. ccxxv.	. Folio 224.
351 .	1,	Marchionni	. Marchionne.

except the King of France who possessed resources so ample, besides a numerous suite of dependent Ghibelines eagerly crowding to his standard; no Italian prince had hitherto equalled him in solid power, and few in the ambition and talent to use it. Nevertheless, animated by present danger all classes at Florence moved with a common impulse and worked in concert; manifestoes were published and circulated throughout the peninsula; aid was demanded from Naples, Siena, Perugia, and Bologna, besides all the Guelphic cities of Romagna and Tuscany, and alliances formed with most of them.

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FLORENTINE HISTORY.

BOOK THE FIRST.

CHAPTER XIX.

FROM A.D. 1336 TO A.D. 1342.

ALARMED at Mastino's ambition and seeing war inevitable, the Florentines worked with all the vigour of angry men, and they had need, for he was no common enemy: A.D. 1336. the lord of Verona, of Padua, Parma, and Vicenza; of Brescia Treves and Feltro; of Beluno, Modena and Lucca; with a revenue of 700,000 florins, assumed so imposing an aspect as to justify full belief in the fulfilment of his most arrogant denunciations. We are assured by Villani that there was not at this epoch a single potentate of Europe except the King of France who possessed resources so ample, besides a numerous suite of dependent Ghibelines eagerly crowding to his standard; no Italian prince had hitherto equalled him in solid power, and few in the ambition and talent to use it. Nevertheless, animated by present danger all classes at Florence moved with a common impulse and worked in concert; manifestoes were published and circulated throughout the peninsula; aid was demanded from Naples, Siena, Perugia, and Bologna, besides all the Guelphic cities of Romagna and Tuscany, and alliances formed with most of them.

The Lombard members of the late league were called upon to see its conditions fulfilled, and open or secret negotiations were commenced with almost all the states whose domestic quarrels did not prevent their joining in hostilities against a man now become formidable even to the most powerful. A board of four Popolani and two nobles was created to conduct the war under the title of "*I Sei della Guerra.*" Fourteen other citizens of the popular class were also formed into a committee of ways and means to supply the general funds; for that of the combined army of Florence and Venice which was destined to act in Lombardy, seems to have been directed by a particular board hereafter to be noticed; both being limited to one year's duration: yet this was a long stride, and thus the evanescent nature of the ordinary administration was corrected by a necessity arising from a wider, more permanent, and more complex system of exterior politics.

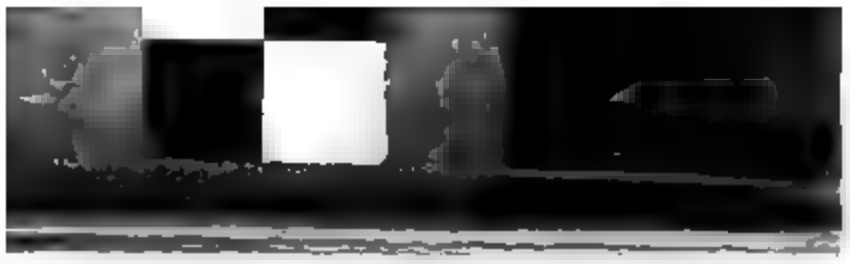
These energetic measures rendered the citizens so confident that on hearing of Pier Saccone's sudden alliance with Mastino they instantly declared war against him without an attempt to negotiate, and promptly occupying the mountain passes of Romagna cut off all communication between these new allies, while in concert with Perugia hostilities were carried up to the very walls of Arezzo. But the great anxiety of Florence was to adopt the most secure and effectual way of annoying so distant an enemy as Mastino; as the operations against Lucca even if successful could but slightly affect the centre of his solid domains and it became necessary to find him enemies nearer home. Secret negotiations were accordingly commenced with Azzo Visconti and other potentates, but more successfully with Venice, first through Florentine merchants on the spot, and then by a formal, but still secret, embassy composed of the gonfalonier Francesco Baldovinetti and that Salvestro de' Medici who afterwards acted so conspicuous a part in the political factions of his country. The Florentine merchants were also

statesmen, and their government could therefore place the management of any secret negotiation in the hands of men who had been, or might, in the usual course of events, become ministers of the republic; who were perfectly acquainted with the policy of their own country as well as with the character and resources of that in which they resided; and who moreover were enabled to preserve the most profound secrecy by means of their simple mercantile character.

Venice was at this period highly incensed against the Scaligeri of Verona as well on account of severe commercial restrictions in the territories of Treves and Padua, as on that of their interference with the salt works of Chioggia by a rival manufactory which they established near Mestre: the Venetians being jealous of their own monopoly of this article annoyed the rising town and works, and the brothers retaliated by destroying their salt pans at Chioggia and occupying Mestre itself *.

Before this epoch Venice had been almost exclusively employed in her eastern trade and conquests, and interfered but little in Italian politics: although decided imperialists, the Guelph and Ghibeline factions were scarcely felt in that republic, and a succession of treaties with the rulers of Treves Padua and Verona had hitherto protected their commerce in Lombardy and the neighbouring states. With Florence at this epoch the Venetians may be supposed to have had no common feeling but the usual petty jealousies of mercantile competition. wherefore the project of a close union between them was full of doubt and difficulty: common danger however removed all obstacles and a treaty was concluded on the twenty-first of June by which two thousand men-at-arms and two thousand infantry were to be employed in the territories of Treviso and Verona, the expense being equally divided between them. A

* Sardi, Istorie Ferraresi, Lib. vi., p. 109.—Sabellico, Cronaca Veneta, Lib. i. cap. iii.—Muratori, Annali, Anno 1336.



mixed commission of Venetian and Florentine deputies was to direct the general course of warfare, with power to increase the army, and ample funds for secret service an item of great moment in those days when the revolt of disaffected towns formed one of the most common operations of war Florence was also to act independently against Lucca and if successful attack Parma at her own charge, both parties engaging neither to make peace or truce without each other's consent and to give three months' notice, before its natural termination, of their intention either to finish or continue the alliance. The treaty was then formally published by proclamation both at Venice and Florence on the fifteenth of July, and thus began the greatest enterprise which the latter state had as yet undertaken and the first grave interference of the former in Italian affairs. This event was more remarkable because Venice, although habitually inclined to the Cæsars, had hitherto avoided any serious intimacy with Italian powers, while Florence always an unflinching adherent of the church; which Venice ever kept distinct from and subservient to the state; had in 1309 mainly assisted in defeating the Venetian armies near Ferrara when opposed to the forces of Clement the Fifth about the disputed succession to that principality. To conduct the war with vigour ten of the most skilful and opulent merchants of Florence were chosen, and with full powers to raise funds on the security of 300,000 florins of annual revenue arising from certain taxes now for the most part doubled: one third of that sum however having been already appropriated to pay the interest of a debt contracted for an unnecessary war against Lucca. These ten commissioners in conjunction with certain mercantile houses and other commercial men, (amongst them the historian Gio. Villani) undertook to raise supplies for the whole duration of hostilities in the following manner. They engaged with their own means and credit immediately to raise 100,000 florins, one-third of which

was a direct payment from their private coffers, and the remainder from a loan amongst the citizens on the above mentioned public security; some of the creditors to be repaid in a year, others in two, according to circumstances. Those who thus confidently risked their money received an interest of fifteen per cent. per annum; more cautious people who preferred the responsibility of a private company to the security of public faith, had only eight per cent.; while the united body of managing merchants appear to have cleared about five per cent. on the whole transaction. Any person without disposable capital who yet made use of his credit to borrow money for the purpose of supplying the public need, had a remuneration or "*guerdon*" of twenty per centum.

The expenses of this war were thus securely provided for, but a national debt and a pernicious system of public loans was now commenced which continued until it ruined the republic. Two resident commissioners were dispatched to manage the financial and commissariat departments at Venice in conjunction with two Venetians, while a couple more of knightly rank assisted in the ducal cabinet and two other knights were attached to the army as permanent members of the general's council. These monetary arrangements received the applause not only of Florence but of all Italy which as yet did not perceive the danger of an accumulating public debt, which vampire-like began thus softly to fan the public while it drained the sources of national existence.

A thousand infantry, bearing on their arms the united badge of the two states, marched immediately from Florence and were followed by six hundred men-at-arms, the same that had been guarding the mountain passes between Arezzo and Romagna under Pino della Tosa and Gerozzo de' Bardi: Venice no less active immediately poured fifteen hundred men-at-arms and a great force of infantry into the territory of Treves. and Mastino had long foreseen and prepared for the combat*.

* Gio. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. xlv., xlviii., and l.—Scip. Ammirato, Lib. viii., p. 103.

Knowing how much mischief might be committed by a comparatively insignificant enemy, and having often experienced the Ubaldini's fickleness, the Florentines sent a messenger to learn what party they intended to favour in the approaching contest. This powerful clan with the Bishop of Arezzo at its head had already felt both the friendship and enmity of Florence and had then no mind to forfeit the one or unnecessarily provoke the other. All therefore without hesitation, not only declared for the allies but offered to attack Arezzo and the Tarlati, and even allow the Florentines to dispose of them and their possessions during the war; saving only episcopal rights; provided that they should be comprised as allies in any treaty that might eventually be concluded, and these conditions were gladly accepted *.

About the same period another league was formed with Naples, Bologna, and Perugia, who together agreed to raise three thousand cavalry in aid of the Guelphic cause of which Florence alone furnished eight hundred: Faenza and Imola were afterwards admitted to this confederacy and an embassy was dispatched to implore the pope's favour and if possible reconcile him with Bologna. Siena subsequently joined it under certain conditions which preserved her friendship with Arezzo, and King Robert added one hundred men-at-arms to his contingent.

During these transactions neither the army of Florence nor Mastino's Lucchese garrison was inactive; inroads, skirmishes, and devastation occupied the troops of both nations; the defences of Empoli, Pontormo, Montelupo and other places which had suffered from the flood, were now repaired and every preparation made for active warfare; a leader alone was wanting but soon and unexpectedly supplied. The Rossi of Parma after suffering excessive injustice from the power and perfidy of Mastino and their hereditary foes the Correggi of that city,

* Scip. Ammirato, Lib. viii., p. 404.

found themselves ousted from all their domains in the Parmasan and finally besieged by the Veronese army under Spinetto Malespini in their only remaining stronghold of Pontremoli. Piero de' Rossi the youngest of six brothers is described as a man of high military talent and general accomplishments both of mind and body: to a daring courage he joined exceeding skill and prudence; prompt and decisive as a general, he was averse from every act of cruelty and bore a character unstained by the vices of that barbarous age. It was his custom on undertaking any enterprise to warn his troops against unnecessary bloodshed and to prohibit all outrage; and so much was he beloved for his humanity that there were but few in his camp whether natives or strangers who did not give him the name of father. Tall and beautiful in person he unconsciously attracted the notice of every woman who looked on him, while the purity of his morals was such as gained him the reputation of never having overstepped the bounds of chastity: soldiers of every rank and nation were devoted to him, and this was returned by a liberality that frequently left him destitute of everything but his horse, his arms, and his ornaments. When he died his soldiers put on mourning, and long and deeply bewailed their misfortune. Piero Rosso had been detained as a hostage at Verona but contrived to escape, and on the twenty-third of August offered his services in person at Florence: struck with the confidence of one so lately their enemy the citizens felt more disposed to remember the services of his grandfather who had led their troops to victory at Campaldino, than the injuries they had suffered from Piero himself while in possession of Lucca, and without hesitation gave him command of the army then ready to march against his former subjects now the vassals of Mastino*. In this situation he ravaged the enemy's country, insulted his capital, and even passed the Ser-

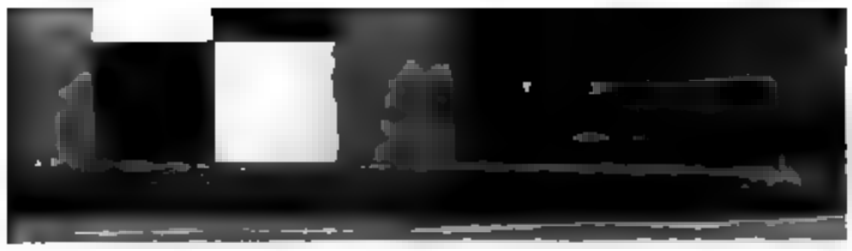
* Sabellico, Cronaca Veneta, Lib. i., cap. iii. — Sismondi, vol. iv., p. 117, who cites Cortusius' Hist.

chio by the bridge of San Quilico in hopes of drawing down on himself the besieging army from Pontremoli: Malespini did not move, but the governor of Lucca leaving the defence of that city to the inhabitants made a bold push with all his garrison to the strong position of Cerruglio where he could intercept Piero's communications with Florence and compel him to retreat. The Florentine general thus forced to make a retrograde movement met his enemy on the fifth of September at Castruccio's ancient intrenchments between the marshy lake of Bientino (then more extensive than at present) and the mountain: the Lucchese were instantly attacked and defeated, but the excited soldiers heedless of Piero's command bore rashly on in pursuit until near the gates of Cerruglio they fell into an ambuscade, and were in their turn driven back with great slaughter. Piero Rosso foreseeing the probability of this had kept the rest of his troops in hand, and after covering the reformation of these fugitives he firmly encountered their pursuers who came rushing down the hills in all the confidence of recent victory: an obstinate combat and final defeat of the assailants added new laurels to those already won by the Florentine general, and the capture of Mastino's banner with about thirteen of his principal officers carried such satisfaction to the heart of Florence that Piero was immediately promoted to the more important command of the allied forces in Lombardy where with his brother Marsilio he maintained a high and well-deserved reputation. These two chiefs at the head of fifteen hundred cavalry took the field in October and overran the whole territory of Treviso up to the gates of that city; then returning by Mestre burned its suburbs and pushed on, perhaps with more daring than discretion, amongst the dikes and streams of Padua, until the world marvelled to see them reach Pieve di Sacco unmolested, which they did on the first of November 1336. Here Mastino might have attacked them with four thousand men-at-arms from Padua, but he is accused

of over prudence and the Rossi probably knew his character; yet entangled as they were in that aqueous district, escape would have been difficult and combat almost hopeless. In these trying circumstances Marsilio audaciously proposed to send a challenge to Mastino and all his followers; but the wary Veronese suspected the existence of a secret understanding between the enemy and certain Paduan malcontents, also doubtful of some of his foreign troops, and feeling sure of ultimately taking his adversary in a net by destroying all the roads and bridges of that intersected country; he after an empty show of battle effected the latter object and returned to Padua convinced that he had been prudent in refusing what the enemy seemed so anxiously to desire. On this the Rossi began their retreat and with great and rapid efforts past every stream river and canal by rafts of timber or wickerwork, until they reached Bovolento on a branch of the Baciglione only eight miles from Padua but commanding every water communication between the Adige and Chioggia. Here covered on two sides by the river in a strongly-fortified position which had free access to Venice the combined army posted itself for the winter equally ready for offensive or defensive operations; and this became their permanent head quarters during the war*.

The troops were soon augmented to three thousand five hundred horsemen and five thousand foot, and with fresh spirit attacked the Paduan salt works at Castello delle Saline which Mastino had fortified: he and Alberto della Scala advanced to their defence; Piero offered battle which Mastino refused and the place was carried in spite of him on the twenty-second of November; this and a subsequent discomfiture of four hundred Veronese cavalry on their way to Monselice diminished the Sca-

* Leon. Aretino, Lib. vi., p. 116.— Gio. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. liv.— Sabellico, Cronaca Veneta, Lib. ii., cap. i., &c.—Scip. Ammirato, Lib. viii., p. 407.—Muratori, Annali, An. 1336.



ligeri's reputation while it augmented that of their antagonists. A.D. 1337. Thus stimulated, Piero on the twenty-ninth of January assailed Padua itself, made a lodgement in the suburb of Ognissanti and would have maintained his post had not the garrison succeeded in burning it down: this partial success was not however entirely owing to Piero, for Marsilio and Ubertino da Carrara two chiefs of Padua related to the Rossi, and by whose means that city fell under the dominion of Verona, had kept up a constant communication with their kinsmen: the cause was that Ubertino's wife had been outraged by Mastino's elder brother Albert della Scala, then governing Padua, who with the bold brutality of a tyrant boasted of it even to the husband himself: Ubertino said nothing, but immediately added two golden horns to his ordinary crest until the moment of revenge arrived. War favoured the designs of these chiefs but Mastino probably suspecting this secret intercourse with the Rossi, was far from having that absolute confidence in their fidelity that they managed to inspire into his brother, with whom their influence was unbounded *.

Trusting to this Piero again on the seventh of February pushed forward a small force and carried the suburb of San Marco, but disappointed by his supporting columns which had gone astray in the night, he found himself at daylight in considerable danger, with only a few men and no sign of revolt in the city: rising with the circumstances, he boldly attacked a gate, as if strong and confident, while his troops were gradually withdrawn, and the garrison blinded by this audacity allowed him to make good his retreat unmolested.

The usual style of warfare followed these unsuccessful attempts; indeed scarcely any other could have been effectually adopted where each city, town, and village, was inclosed or regularly fortified, yet entirely dependent on the neighbourhood for its daily subsistence: a decisive battle being seldom

* Ammirato, Lib viii., p. 413.—Muratori, Annali, Anno 1337.

the wish of either party, devastation, revolts, sudden assaults, empty boasts, insults, and cartels of defiance, characterised the general course of hostilities in these romantic times. But the average of human ability, however varied and circumscribed its field of action may be, is in its particular application to the popular business of the age and nation nearly equal at all epochs: we may therefore conclude that the mode of warfare then pursued was probably best suited to the period and views of belligerent nations, and he who displayed most talent in conducting it was as much the great captain of the age as Pompey, Cæsar, or Hannibal. The scale of operations was necessarily too confined for any extensive exhibition of deep military talent, yet the objects of war were perhaps accomplished as effectually as in the grander operations of our own day; although its horrors are common to both. Where pure democracy prevails, heavy contributions, or the devastation of their country, seems a legitimate means of making self-governed nations feel and appreciate all the inconveniencies of war; but this becomes unmodified cruelty when they are in reality the mere vassals, or only the nominal controllers of their own government. In the times and country of which we write the general's capacity was judged of more by the amount of his successful ravages than his skill in conducting a campaign to any decisive national result; it principally lay in besieging towns, persuading or bribing places to revolt; in scouring the country, insulting the enemy, and retiring, loaded with plunder, after a few weeks of devastation and having arrogantly defied the adversary to battle. In the present instance the object of Venice and Florence was to exhaust Mastino's resources by a protracted war which they knew he could not very long maintain against two of the most powerful Italian republics.

Orlando Rosso, who during these events appears to have been placed at the head of the Florentine army in Tuscany, marched in November to raise the siege of Pontremoli which however

had already capitulated, and he returned without having in any way distinguished himself, for he lacked the talent of his two brothers and seems to have owed his exaltation rather to their fame than any public impression of superior ability: the Florentines however still kept him at the head of their Tuscan legions, for their spirit and confidence at this epoch mounted high, and their resources were great and conspicuous. Besides the great force in Lombardy, which had already been increased to nearly five thousand men-at-arms, and her own contingent for the Guelphic League, with Orlando Rosso's powerful army employed against Lucca; she still waged a separate war on Arezzo, and by the help of Perugia pressed that republic so closely that Piero Saccone now despairing of aid from Verona was compelled to give way before the popular cry and commence negotiations with the members of this confederacy. The demands of Perugia were however thought too exacting, and a secret attempt of that people to surprise Arezzo during the treaty at once put an end to it, so that hostilities recommenced. To Florence the Tarlati looked for more favourable terms as their mother was a Florentine of the Frescobaldi race and they had many kinsmen in that city from whom they expected support; actual hostilities were therefore no bar to this secret negotiation, but there would still have been great difficulty in concluding a separate peace had it not been for an occurrence that was eagerly seized on by Florence as a clear justification of her conduct in doing so, although contrary to the letter and spirit of her alliance with Perugia.

Lucigniano, a dependency of Arezzo being hard pressed by the Perugians sent ambassadors with an offer of its allegiance to Florence who refused it from a fear of displeasing the latter by a violation of the treaty which prohibited exclusive acquisitions or separate negotiations to any confederate without the general sanction. Upon this the people of Lucigniano offered their town to Perugia and were instantly received under its protec-

tion, while about the same time the Bishop of Arezzo another member of the League, appropriated to himself the strong fortress of Montefocappio. These events excited the real or feigned resentment of Florence which immediately followed up the treaty with Pier Saccone and by the assistance of Regolino de' Tolommei of Siena, who was afterwards pensioned for it by the Florentines, brought all to a conclusion on the seventh of March 1337 *.

By this important step Florence acquired the lordship of Arezzo for ten years at the expense of 25,000 florins paid to the Tarlati for the cession of their claims on the city itself; and 14,000 more for the rights of that family in the Val d' Ambra. Besides these, 18,000 florins were nominally lent to the Aretines to pay off the garrison of foreign mercenaries the instruments of their oppression, while the Tarlati retained all the rest of their own family property and became citizens of Florence as of Arezzo. Twelve Florentine commissaries at the head of three thousand five hundred troops then took possession of that city on the tenth of March and were met at two miles distance by almost all the inhabitants of both sexes bearing olive branches in their hands and making the air resound with cries of "*Peace, Peace, long live the Republic and people of Florence.*" Thus accompanied these commissaries entered Arezzo and formally received the resignation of Piero Saccone: it was immediately remodelled in its old democratic form without distinction of party; the Guelphs were recalled, after sixty years of exile; a general amnesty proclaimed; all offences pardoned, and universal joy pervaded a city that had so long and keenly suffered from external war and domestic tyranny.

Great must be the misery of that country which thus joyfully resigns its liberty and independence into the hands of a stranger! But the Aretines' satisfaction was somewhat diminished by the immediate construction of two citadels and

* Malavolti, Stor., Parte ii., Lib. v., p. 98.

the permanent residence of a strong Florentine garrison: a board of twelve commissioners was also created with extraordinary powers, but subject to quarterly renewal, for controlling conjointly with the Florentine seignory the public administration of the town.

Thus was completed the annexation of this noble appendage to the Florentine state at the total expense of about 100,000 florins; besides a quarrel with Perugia, and the loss of some reputation as a direct breach of international faith. Yet Florence, fairly enough, cited the example of Perugia herself, as well in her incipient negotiation with Arezzo as in the acquisition of Lucigniano; they declared that the alliance had actually expired; but most jesuitically added that its provisions although they prohibited lesser acquisitions did not forbid that of the enemy's capital. They asserted that the Aretines would never have come to any terms with Perugia wherefore if they had not at once stepped in and closed with Tarlati, that city would have been lost to both parties and the Guelphic cause in Tuscany deteriorated. Such reasoning did not satisfy Perugia and Florence so far gave way as to allow a judge of appeals to reside and administer justice in Arezzo for five years under the title of "*Conservator of the Peace*," which with the cession of a few inferior towns softened the feelings of her ally while Florence retained the sovereignty. Villani acknowledges that the conduct of his country in this transaction was not strictly just, and that the infidelity of Perugia did not excuse it; but that she was tempted by the prospect of terminating an expensive war and by the acquisition of considerable strength, territory, and national security*.

As yet the struggle in Lombardy was not marked by any permanent advantage although the combined forces had aug-

* Istorie Pistolesi, Anno 1336.—Gio. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. lix., lx., lxi.—Pompeo Pellini, Hist. di Perugia, Lib. vii., pp. 539, 540, &c.—Leon. Aretino, Lib. vi.—Scip. Ammirato, Lib. viii., p. 415.

mented to five thousand horsemen with "*Barbuta*"* or visored helmets, besides a numerous infantry; an immense display of strength in those days even without reckoning the two thousand men-at-arms employed by Florence in the Tuscan war. After an unsuccessful attempt by Mastino to assassinate Piero Rosso whose camp at Bovolento he attacked and fired, a second invasion of the Trevisan district was made by the latter and then the haughty lord of Verona began to suspect that he had miscalculated the spirit and resources of his antagonists as well as his own powers. His deceit, pride and aggressions had roused two rich and powerful antagonists who long before this had compelled him to crave the good offices of his former confederates in negotiating a peace; some of these chiefs had met at Venice for that purpose in the previous January; Obizzo Marquis of Ferrara, Giovanni Pepoli, Manfredi Pio and other ambassadors embarked on the Po "in a vessel then first built by Serdino of Ferrara the court chamberlain, and afterwards called the *Buncintoro*; for it was large and magnificent," says *Sardi*, "with saloons and chambers and had for its ensign a Centaur†.

* That the "*Barbuta*" was a visored helmet may be proved by a reference to the *Orlando Innamorato* of Boyardo, (not Berni), Libro i°, Canto xviii°, Stanza xiv°,—Canto xxi, and Lib. i°, Stanza xix.—

"Iæi per quel colpa niente si muta
Ma un tal ne dette al cavalier ardito,
Che *batter* gli fe il *mento alla Barbuta*
Cala nel scudo, e tutto l'ha partito,
Maglia, ne piastra, ne sbergo l'auta,
Ma crudelmente al fianco l'ha ferito."

"Menando lor le botte aspre e diverse,
Rinaldo che aspettava il tempo ha côlto;
Pero che, come uberto si scoperse,
Giunse Fusberta[a] e l'elmo ebbe disciolto.
La *Barbuta* e l' *guancial* tutto gli aperse,
E crudelmente lo ferì nel volto," &c.

† The name of the Venetian state galley, the Bucentaur (*Buccintoro*) is considered to be a corruption of "*Ducentorum*" because in the decree for

[a] The name of Rinaldo's sword.

These lords proceeded to Venice where they were joined by Guido Gonzaga of Mantua, and according to *Sabellico*, about sixty diplomatic envoys of various states interested in the affairs of this powerful seignor: his court was crowded with all the nobles of Northern Italy that were in need either of favour or protection, and he himself ambitiously aimed at the kingly crown of Lombardy. The Lombard ambassadors were publicly instructed to restore peace if possible, but had secret orders to join the allies if their exertions proved unsuccessful. At this conference Marsilio Carrara of Padua also assisted as an envoy of the Scaligeri and (probably with the connivance of government) was insulted by the Venetian populace on his arrival in order to remove all suspicion of his real object; for it is related that in presence of the other ambassadors either at a public audience or a banquet, he said in an under voice to the Doge, "*What will happen O Prince, if we deliver Padua into thy hands?*" To which Dandolo replied without any alteration of voice or feature, "*We will bestow it upon thee*"*.

This negotiation failed entirely, for the allies would listen to no terms short of ceding Padua, Parma, Lucca, and Treviso; upon which the Marquis of Ferrara at once openly joined the league, and in a general meeting of the Lombard princes held at Cremona in the following April not a chief would stir a finger in Mastino's cause: on the contrary Azzo Visconti in bold and homely terms reproached him with his faults. "Messer "Mastino," said he, "as I have had no share in the beginning "of your war, so do I wish to avoid its middle, and its end. "And the reason you are so puffed up with the glory of your

building this vessel there was a provision that it should have a crew of 200 men.—The model alone remains at Venice and like the city itself is only a beautiful and empty relic of the ancient original.

* Sardi, Hist. Ferraresi, Libro vi., p. 110.—Libro del Polistore, tomo xxiv., p. 700, Rer. Ital. Scriptores.—Sabellico, Cronica Veneta, Decha iiª, Lib. iiº, cap. iiº, p. 100.—Muratori, Annali, An. 1336, 1337.

" present rule, is because you scorn all the world. When I " sent you a letter you treated it with contempt, and cared not " to open it, or read it; but threw it on the bed, and remained " four or five days before you answered me. Besides this you " have had made for yourself a crown of gold, hoping to be " chosen King of Lombardy; and to this part I reply that " I will not suffer such a king. If the other lords of Lom- " bardy will have you I know not. So now you may depart " when you please, but place no hope in me " *.

Shortly after this Azzo Visconti, Guido Gonzaga, Obizzo of Este, and other princes united against him; a body of his German troops deserted, several dependent towns of the Paduan and Trevesan states revolted; and in June the allied armies of Milan, Ferrara, and Mantua were reënforced at the last city by Marsilio Rosso with two thousand four hundred men-at-arms from Bovolento where Piero at the head of sixteen hundred more and a numerous infantry still remained in camp. Lucchino Visconti the generalissimo of this fine army, now four thousand strong in men-at-arms alone, carried fire and sword up to the gates of Verona: Mastino who wanted not skill, spirit, or soldiers and would not brook the being thus bearded in his own capital, instantly poured out about three thousand cavalry and dared Lucchino to battle at a place called *Isola della Scala:* but whether from want of resolution; disagreement with the marquis Niccolo of Ferrara; or a suspicion of treachery in his German mercenaries; or it may be, as Villani drily observes, " from the natural dislike of one tyrant to overwhelm another;" Lucchino retreated in great confusion on the twenty-first of June with the loss of his tents and baggage †. Leaving Verona strongly garrisoned Mastino pushed boldly forward, and in his turn insulted Mantua; then turning suddenly on Piero Rosso at Bovolento forced him to recall

* Libro del Polistore, cap. xxiii.—Rer. Ital. Scrip., tom. xxiv., p. 763.

† Muratori. Annali, 1337.—Lib. del Polistore, cap. xxii.

Marsilio in order to be able to fight and restore his communication with Venice which the Veronese had cut off by occupying a position that also prevented the junction of the latter without risking a battle. The danger was imminent, but Piero's sagacity and the necessity of Mastino's presence elsewhere, extricated both himself and brother from their difficulties; for knowing that the Veronese army which was only three miles off, depended exclusively on the river for their supply of water, he caused all the filth of his camp to be cast into it; besides which, immense quantities of the hemlock abounding in that neighbourhood was bruised to a pulp and then sent down the stream. neither man or horse could drink, and Mastino would have been obliged by this alone, as most authors say he was, to abandon his position even if other circumstances had not compelled him to retreat *.

A harassing protracted warfare was the game of Venice, and the Rossi were never idle; the maintenance of four thousand German horse alone, besides his Italian troops was a drain that even Mastino's treasury could not long withstand and secret intelligence with Marsilio Carrara gave the allies a hope of speedily becoming masters of Padua. Alberto della Scala at this period resided in that city, a man more addicted to licentious pleasures than government, to the amusements of peace than the conduct of war: the outrage committed on Ubertino's wife has already been mentioned, and yet, as if the injury were forgotten on both sides, this nobleman with his brother Marsilio were as we have said the principal

* Sabellico asserts that he was only compelled to decamp by the intelligence of Luccino (Azzo?) Visconti's appearance before Brescia but dates will not admit of this although it may be very possible that suspicion of Brescian infidelity might thus early have arisen in Mastino's mind. Sabellico is scarce of dates and confused in his narrative. (Lib. ix°, cap. iii°, p. 102, Decha. ii°.) The anonymous author of the "*Istorie Pistolesi*" says that Marsilio Rosso secretly passed the river where Mastino did not expect him and effected a junction with Piero, upon which Mastino decamped; but there is much disagreement in the different accounts of this affair.

counsellors and most intimate friends of Alberto. Marsilio had once been lord of Padua but resigned it to the power or influence of Cane della Scala and longed to reëstablish himself. Ubertino was excited by ambition and private revenge; the people were reduced to despair by exactions, and furious from daily insults, therefore all parties were ready to revolt. A secret correspondence with Venice was maintained which Mastino is said to have discovered and immediately wrote to desire that the two brothers should be imprisoned and put to death: Alberto was at chess when the letter came and handed it over to Marsilio without breaking the seal: the latter read his death-warrant, and with unchanged countenance calmly told Alberto that his brother merely wrote for a certain falcon of which he had need at a hawking party, but sending Uberto instant word to prepare for revolt that very night while he remained with Alberto to prevent any further intelligence reaching him from Mastino*.

Piero Rosso apprised of these preparations moved silently on the night of the third of August to the gate of Ponte Corvo which was instantly opened by the Guelphic adherents of Marsilio; at the same hour Alberto's palace was surrounded, his guards disarmed, and he himself made prisoner. The Veneto-Florentine army, four thousand strong in cavalry, scoured the city but molested none except the enemy's soldiers; rigid discipline was observed; Alberto was led a prisoner to Venice and on the sixth of August Marsilio da Carrara was declared Lord of Padua by the assembled people and admitted as an independent member of the league †.

This success however humiliating to Mastino was quickly followed by two events that threw a gloom over that joy

* Istoria, Padovana di Galeazzo Gataro. (Apud Sismondi, vol. iv., p. 122).
† Istorie Pistolesi, An. 1337.—Gio. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. lxii., lxiii., lxv.—Scip. Ammirato, Lib. viii. p. 422.—Muratori, Annali, An. 1337.—Leon. Aretino, Libro vi.—Sabellico, Cronica Veneta, Decha ii^{a}, Lib. ii^{o}, cap. ii., p. 111.

with which so brilliant an event had filled the public mind, and were he not already reduced so low might have changed the whole aspect of the war. Marsilio de' Rossi worn out with extreme exertion fell sick at Padua, and Piero while leading on his men to the assault of Monselice was struck by a javelin or arrow in the loins, and died on the seventh of August: grief at his brother's death conspiring with disease and exhaustion, brought Marsilio to the grave on the seventeenth; and Orlando out of pure regard to their memory was immediately made generalissimo of the combined armies. The war had been left by them in so prosperous a state that Orlando, inferior as he was in abilities, had little difficulty in maintaining the ascendant: Mestre was taken soon after, Monselice under the able Pietro del Verme held out for many months and its citadel much longer; Orci and Canneto in the Brescian district followed and announced the speedy loss of that capital; for the Brescians tired of subjection determined to change their master, and negotiated with Azzo Visconti, who by a stratagem gained possession of the place on the eighth of October, and of the citadel shortly after. It was confirmed to him by the allies and especially the Florentines, for in their hatred to Mastino they seemed to have forgotten that Azzo had been the friend of Castruccio, that he was the victor of Altopascio and the disdainful insulter of their own capital. Mastino now became alarmed; Padua and Brescia were lost; his brother a prisoner; town after town were slipping from his grasp; his treasury was exhausted, and fortune everywhere his enemy: nor was this all; Charles, the son of John King of Bohemia, now Duke of Carinthia, had joined the allies, made himself master of Feltre, and ultimately of Belluno: so that the Veronese chieftain was forced to make another effort for peace but without success. The confederates were too high in spirit, too arrogant, and too exacting in their demands, and Mastino was not yet down; negotiations were therefore

broken off; Albert still remained a prisoner, and the war recommenced, more roughly than before: the Veronese district was again ravaged in March and April, and Verona itself insulted by running for the Palio under its walls; the Adige was passed without opposition, and sixteen hostile towns unmercifully plundered *.

In May the strong and important town of Montecchio, the intermediate link between Vicenza and Verona, surrendered to the confederates and resisted all subsequent efforts for its recapture; Marsilio Carrara died in March and was succeeded by his cousin Ubertino who reduced Monselice in August; many combats took place in various quarters, and in September Mastino was beaten with great loss while attempting to retake the town of Montagnana; the allies rode triumphant through all the land and even mastered a suburb of Vicenza itself, while the remainder of the city was reduced to the last extremity. Mastino finally demanded aid of the emperor; but Louis although willing was now at enmity with his former confederate John of Bohemia and found the Tyrolese passes occupied by the young Duke of Carinthia so as to preclude every chance of succour from that quarter. Thus baffled and unfortunate, his capital threatened, and Vicenza on the point of surrendering, this proud leader was driven once more to negotiate; but now with some hope of dissolving a confederacy that he knew was united only by individual interest and a common anger against himself. To gain his object he determined to treat secretly with Venice alone, and if Villani says true his ambassadors were ordered to distribute money with a lavish hand amongst her principal citizens, imploring them not to countenance the total ruin of Mastino and with him that of all the imperial party in Italy. To give their exertions greater effect they industriously spread a report that if the negotiation failed Louis would march with six thousand French Barbute into Italy,

A.D. 1338.

* Gio. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. lxxiii. and lxxvii.

and take part in the contest: these bribes and threats were accompanied by the most advantageous offers of peace, and seconded by the Pisan and Lucchese envoys, both being Ghibeline friends of Mastino and jealous of Florentine ascendancy. But this prince was not friendless even in Venice: his large bribes, the accomplishment of their own objects, and their natural inclination towards his politics added to some little fear of an imperial visit, seemed to have tempted its citizens so far to sacrifice their ally as to consent that the great object of Florentine warfare, the cession of Lucca, should be entirely excluded from any treaty. A separate peace was accordingly signed with Mastino in December and on the eighteenth of the same month announced by a formal embassy to the Florentines. At this unexpected intelligence anger and disappointment took possession of Florence, and her people were in a ferment; but the Venetians remained cool and determined: fair conditions they said were secured to her which might be accepted or rejected as she pleased, but no longer count on the assistance of Venice if she decided on continuing the war with Mastino. Councils, debates, public and private meetings and universal anger, were the result of this haughty message; passion prevailed here, prudence there, but mortification everywhere: resentment finally gave way to necessity; a heavy expense had been incurred; immense exertions made, large debts contracted, the revenue mortgaged for six years, every nerve of the commonwealth strained to breaking, and therefore small hope of success in single-handed warfare against the still powerful lord of Verona. Prudence finally gained the ascendant, and ambassadors reached Venice with instructions to insist first on a strict observation of the original conditions of the league; and failing this, to try for better terms; but with secret orders to sign the articles, if nothing better might be effected. It was a vain effort; nothing of great importance could be gained from that implacable commonwealth;

the treaty was therefore ratified and peace proclaimed at Florence on the twenty-fourth of January 1339, with a sullen expression of displeasure. This was not diminished by a final settlement of accounts in which the Venetians still managed to preserve the ascendant, and Florence again yielded to the inflexibility of a republic that now for the first time laid the foundation of a new dominion on "Terra firma," a dominion more brilliant than salutary, by which she was finally entangled in the mazes of continental politics at a moment when every exertion was necessary to preserve her waning influence in the east, the real source of her power. A.D. 1339.

By this treaty Treviso and its territory besides several other important places were ceded to Venice, others to the lord of Padua; Feltre and Belluno to the Duke of Carinthia; the Rossi were reëstablished in their possessions, the navigation of the Po declared free; Azzo Visconti was confirmed in the sovereignty of Brescia; Alberto della Scala released unransomed; and Florence once more excluded from Lucca, the great object of her aspirations, although in thirty-one months she had expended more than 600,000 florins in the war. Yet was not her interest entirely neglected, nor was her portion small, although inadequate either to her expectations or exertions: she was confirmed in the possession of Fucecchio, Castel-Franco, Santa Croce, Santa Maria-a-Monte, and Montetopoli in Val-d'Arno; of Montecatini, Monte Sommano, Monte Vettolini, Massa, Cozzile and Uzzàno in Val di Nievole; and of Avellano, Sorana, and Castel-Vecchio, in Val-di-Luna; besides the important towns of Buggiano, Pescia, and the fortress of Altopascio which were subsequently added, along with two other small fortresses. Thus a great cantle was scooped out of the Lucchese territory, its frontier opened, and that of Florence everywhere extended to the west, while the important acquisition of Arezzo enlarged, rounded, and strengthened her eastern boundary and increased her political importance.

Within a brief period she had been twice overreached, and the people were discontented: but she had already meted out the same measure without remorse to Perugia and justified her own infidelity, therefore met no sympathy *.

Thus ended the Lombard war by a disadvantageous peace after two years and a half of actual hostilities; a war which although reluctantly concluded and failing in its principal and most selfish object, was still so far successful as to cripple the power humble the pride and render abortive the ambition of Mastino, who with poetical justice was finally compelled to pawn the very diadem which he had caused to be made for his contemplated coronation as sole monarch of Lombardy. Yet the bitter pill thus swallowed by Florence, forced on her as it was by financial and commercial distress, was scarcely made palatable by the enemy's abasement: this distress arose in a distant and unexpected quarter and serves to exhibit the vast extent and magnitude of her mercantile transactions: but first it will be expedient to notice some political changes that happened in Italy during the continuance of the Lombard war.

Bologna which never remained long quiet after the expulsion of Bertrand du Poiet, had in 1337 broken out once more into open conflict; the two potent families of Gozzadini and Peppoli, who had been long struggling for mastery, finally came to a decisive battle on the third of July; but one day while the sons of Taddeo de' Peppoli were hotly engaged with Brandaligi de' Gozzadini and many followers on both sides, their father suddenly appeared and parting the combatants as if desirous of peace, took Brandaligi in a friendly manner to his own house and there with plausible discourse persuaded him to disarm his followers. No sooner was this accomplished than the Bianchi, Bentivogli, and others of the Peppoli faction, attacked and destroyed the palaces of the Brandaligi and

* Gio. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. lxxxii., 1339.—Istorie Pistolesi, Anno 1339. lxxxix., &c.—Muratori, Annali, Anno —Sardi, Istorie Ferrarese, Lib. vi.

drove them from the city; and Taddeo with the aid of his kinsman the Marquis of Este, after nearly two months of civic agitation was made Captain-General and Lord of Bologna, but without any alteration in its foreign policy or connexions. The friendly relations with Florence were therefore undisturbed, and the latter was about the same period not ill pleased to find the Guelphic cause relieved from a powerful adversary by the death of Frederic King of Sicily.

This was a prince of great ability, who for many years under all the disadvantages of a new and unsettled dynasty withstood the long-continued assaults and perpetual enmity of so able a monarch as Robert: after Frederic's decease the king's hopes were for a moment revived by a partial revolt in the island, and preparations made for a descent; but the attempt failed and things held on their course. An event of more serious importance to a commercial state was the simultaneous arrest, by Philip de Valois, of all the Italian merchants and bankers in France: usury and extortion were the crimes laid to their charge, and a belief in their guilt was sufficiently grateful to the feelings of a needy aristocracy more eager to borrow than able or willing to pay, much less to calculate the hazard of a loan. But however innocent, there was no release for these victims until the uttermost penalty were exacted, nor until the king had realised a large sum by their ransoms. This of course gave a check to Florentine trade which had already been considerably perplexed by that monarch's debasement of the French currency; for to such an extent had he carried this ruinous practice that the golden florin of Florence which early in his reign was worth only ten Parisian sous, in the year 1340 exchanged for thirty pieces of the same denomination. New impediments and increased troubles arose from Philip's wars with the English Edward which drained the treasuries of both monarchs and half ruined Florence; at a moment too when the resources of this state were all needed to pay for her own expensive armaments.

Edward III. had appointed the two great commercial houses of Bardi and Peruzzi to be his agents and bankers; all his revenues, wool, and every material of wealth passed through their hands, while they undertook to furnish him with the money necessary for war and other public expenses: but this expenditure so much exceeded both the public revenue and mortgaged property that on Edward's return from France the Bardi found themselves his creditors for more than 180,000 marks sterling, and the Peruzzi for upwards of 130,000, each mark being then equal to something more than four and one-third golden florins, or in round numbers to about two pounds nine shillings of the present day *, so that the whole debt amounted to 760,000*l.* sterling, *weight for weight*, (independent of the relative value of corn at the two periods) which, says Villani, was "the worth of a kingdom." He then proceeds to blame these two houses for being so tempted by an excessive desire of gain as to risk not only their own but many other people's property in one precarious investment; for the greater part belonged to persons who had trusted their capital to the management of these long-established firms, or accommodated them with money on the ancient credit of their name. The consequences of this calamity were not confined to Florence, they spread throughout a wide circle of connexions in every part of the civilized world by blighting the nearest as well as the remotest branches of commercial business; yet the extensive landed property of these houses still supported them and total bankruptcy was thus avoided: but the Florentine commercial interest of

* The golden florin of Florence (at 8 to the ounce troy of 560 grains) would weigh 70 grains therefore 4⅓ florins would be equal to 303·3 grains. In two guineas there are about 258⅓ grains of standard gold, therefore the mark sterling (if as Villani says it were then equal to 4⅓ florins) was also equal to 2*l.* 8*s.* 10¾*d.* of the present day in actual weight of metal at a rough calculation. What quantity of corn or labour this weight of gold would *then* purchase is another and more intricate question, and may have differed very widely in Florence as a rich commercial state from the less opulent countries of Europe at the same period; but its purchase value may fairly be taken as at least equal to about £5 of the present day.

which they were considered the sustaining columns, was terribly shaken; no other firm could any longer be trusted, and a general suspicion of all inferior houses pervaded the commercial world from the Sea of Azof to the distant shores of Britain. Just before this catastrophe the Bardi's power and wealth appeared so alarming that a decree passed on the fourteenth of March 1338 aimed directly at them and forbidding all Florentine citizens to purchase towns or castles beyond the frontier, which by removing them from republican authority, facilitated treasonable designs against the state, and was therefore displeasing to an ever-jealous people, who omitted no occasion of curbing the nobles; but more particularly because these same Bardi had recently purchased the fortified towns of Vernia, Margona, and other strong places situated beyond the border, which gave them an independent and, as it was considered, an illegitimate influence, incompatible with the rank of simple citizens in a free state *.

For some time after these events the Florentines remained armed and watchful; their acquisitions on the side of Lucca required setting in order, and Mastino's sudden appearance in that city alarmed the whole community even in the midst of peace; so little was he trusted: but this fear was dispelled by his almost immediate departure with 20,000 florins, the levying of which had been his main object. Nevertheless a nervous feeling of apprehension still weighed on the public mind as if some indistinctly-conceived misfortune were threatening the commonwealth. The unsatisfactory peace after so brilliant and constant a success, had unsettled men's tempers; the unpromising condition of their finances, the distressed state of commerce, the failure of banks, and the sudden and depressing reaction from years of high excitement, had unbraced their

* Gio. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. lxxiv., lxxxviii.—Leon. Aretino, Lib. vi.— Scip. Ammirato, Lib. viii°, p. 428.— Istorie Pistolesi.

mind: this despondency was increased by various meteorological phenomena; such as eclipses, comets, unusual storms of hail and thunder, and consequent injury to public buildings; added to all was a deficient harvest and the dismal prospect of famine, which altogether had an effect so superstitious that the lightest and commonest accidents were received as sinister omens and urged the people through fear of coming wrath to a laudable course of policy. They accordingly became peace-makers; and by their influence restored tranquillity in Romagna where Forli, Cesina, Ravenna, Rimini, Faenza, Imola, and the Counts Guidi, were all in a state of mutual hostility: then turning to Perugia they healed the wound so lately given by the acquisition of Arezzo; mutual concessions were made and Lucignano, Monte Sansovino, Friano, and Anghiari were secured to the first, while Florence was left in the unshackled sovereignty of the last. Amicable arrangements were afterwards entered into with Pisa to meet the coming scarcity, and then public attention was exclusively directed to reform the election of the Seignory which had already been distorted by the daring fraudulence of ambition *.

A parliament or general assembly of the people was held on the twenty-fourth of December to take this important subject into consideration and in the course of their investigation it appeared that one of the means used by ruling citizens to retain the powers of government in their own hands was as follows. It has been already mentioned that the names of all those citizens who had been chosen as eligible for office in the general scrutiny were written on separate billets and deposited in six bags, one for each Sesto of the city; but instead of destroying those billets which bore the names of candidates already elected to the different offices of government; they were artfully transferred to another set of purses until all the names were drawn; and then the same operation was recommenced from the latter,

* Gio. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. c., cii., cv., cxiv.

so that the whole administration of government thus moved in a circle and by remaining in the hands of a certain set became a close aristocracy and almost an oligarchy; to the exclusion of numerous discontented citizens just as ambitious and not more honest than themselves. These last however succeeded in fixing public attention to this abuse and passing a law in full assembly which commanded the immediate destruction of all those names once drawn for office, without however rendering the individuals themselves ineligible at the next periodical scrutiny. In this manner was checked for a time the tyranny of a prevailing faction; but there were other ways of maintaining and even increasing its authority which soon manifested themselves in the second and unlawful appointment of the infamous Gabrielli d' Agobbio as supreme rector of Florence.

The superstitious terror which had gained possession of the inhabitants was ere long confirmed by the visitation of two dreadful scourges; a devouring pestilence followed by hard and withering famine: the first raged through the town in unmitigated fury; the last held it with so close a gripe that the death of fifteen thousand souls within the city by pestilence alone was insufficient to relax its pressure. A sixth of the population exclusive of the suburbs, had perished, and yet the intensity of want was still unmodified: conflagration added new terrors to the scene; and a hail-storm in May which lay like snow upon the ground and destroyed the fruit, increased the general misery; superstition gained fresh force, and Florence was wild with lamentation wretchedness and woe. Religion then interfered and pleaded for misfortune; the public heart was softened; and at the instance of the church it was decreed that all exiles should be recalled and allowed to remain unmolested on paying a certain amount of taxation; and that all confiscated property still in the hands of government should be restored to the widows and orphans of deceased refugees; but the latter part

A.D. 1340.

was imperfectly executed and as was believed the plague raged, in consequence of this fraud, until winter. The Florentines nevertheless drew some comfort from their misfortunes; superstition gradually evaporated and made room for a certain small philosophy which taught them to contemplate the plague as a necessity of nature, and so far merciful as it carried off numbers that must otherwise have slowly perished by famine; while the destruction of their fruit suggested the consolation, that had it remained to be eaten by a sickly famishing population a second pestilence would probably have been produced.

This serious state of the public mind was deemed a good opportunity for checking luxury and reforming that general tendency to show and magnificence which was fast overlaying ancient republican frugality and the simplicity of private life. A new code of sumptuary laws was therefore promulgated, by which excess at feasts, dinners, and weddings; at the making of knights; in presents to brides and other extravagances; in funerals; but especially in dowers, which impeded marriages and filled convents, was once more forbidden without any permanent effect; for besides their direct opposition to the very spirit and nature of human progress, these edicts always come too late for the object; they are commonly enacted after the evil is introduced and the taste confirmed. In a declining state this taste will gradually wear away for lack of nutriment, in an improving one it will push forward against all impediments; the only effectual check to be expected from such restrictions (for there is no prevention) might haply be found in making them prospective, and as it were anticipating the issue of those inevitable cravings of riches and fancy by the prohibition of what is as yet undesired or unattainable, and this could only be accomplished in a poor colony from an already civilised country *.

It has been mentioned that there were other ways of un-

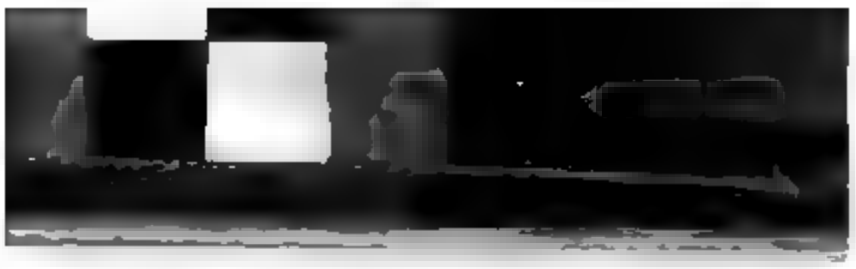
* Gio. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. cxiv.—Scip. Ammirato, Lib. ix., p. 434.

lawfully retaining the administrative power besides that which had been recently abolished; namely by the ruling sect acquiring a paramount influence over the election of the foreign rectors, and thus rendering these functionaries entirely dependent on themselves. This was a favourite mode of working, and we have already seen that not content with the ordinary governors, a third was added in 1335 under the new-fangled title of "*Captain of the Guard*" the value of whose services was gratefully remembered by the ascendant faction. From the bad conduct of a weak or artful administration Florence at this time was indirectly ruled by a cabal composed of two individuals from each Sesto belonging to that class which was called the "*Popolani Grassi*" or richest citizens below the rank of nobles, although superior to most of them in power and opulence. These oligarchs being determined to admit no equals into the government, managed to have the seignory composed of such men only as were devoted to themselves, and selected from their own class alone, equally excluding the lower and lowest classes of citizens and the highest ranks of nobility. But not satisfied with nominating the Podestà, the Captain of the People, and the Executor of the Ordinances of Justice, which were already thought too many for the good government of an independent community, they created the new office above mentioned, and recalled Gabrielli d' Agubbio with a hundred men-at-arms, two hundred infantry and an enormous salary; invested too as before with super-legal powers, to be a ready instrument in oppressing their fellow-citizens; and this in despite of the public decree which for ten years forbade his nomination or that of any of his family to the rectorship of Florence. Such was the nature of its liberty! This tyrant resumed his former course with implacable consistency, and being strengthened with a band of myrmidons and an authority above all law, swept away great and small, guilty and innocent, to destitution, exile, and ignominious death. All Florence trembled save the

master-tyrants that employed him: most of the citizens, but particularly the nobles, were exasperated to so great a degree that a conspiracy was formed amongst the latter to hurl Jacob Gabrielli and his masters from their unlawful eminence and vindicate republican liberty. Amongst the minor sufferers from his injustice were Pietro de' Bardi and Baldo Frescobaldi; the former was fined 6000 Lire for having outraged one of his own vassals at Vernio, a town beyond the jurisdiction of Florence and therefore not subject to the ordinances of justice; the latter was also forced to pay a considerable sum of money for a trifling offence which he even denied ever having committed. Besides these there was also Andrea de' Bardi a kinsman of the first whom the government compelled to surrender his fortress of Mangona to the republic. The Bardi and Frescobaldi, both in rank and fortune were amongst the most illustrious citizens of Florence and therefore unpopular with the ruling faction, especially the former, because their foreign possessions naturally brought them into closer intimacy with other border-chieftains whose territories had many points of contact with those of Florence and who were generally ready to annoy her. Thus outraged, these powerful families united in the determination to bring a conspiracy already in preparation against the government, to an immediate issue, and being joined by the Rossi and many other noble and even popular families on both sides of the Arno, the plot began to assume a formidable aspect. Nor was external aid wanting; many independent barons eager to humble the burghers, had promised their assistance; amongst them were most of the Counts Guidi, the Tarlati of Pietramala, the Pazzi of Val d'arno, the Uberti and Ubaldini of the Apennines, the Guazzalotti of Prato, the Belforti of Volterra and others. These were to gather thickly round Florence on All Saints' eve and the hopes of the conspirators ran high, for on the following day while the whole people were supplicating for the souls of their

dead. Gabrielli and his supporters were to be exterminated, the seignory dissolved, and a revolution accomplished, which according to the belief of some was to have entirely abolished the popular form of government. This impression probably deterred many from openly joining in the plot who would otherwise have been willing; for notwithstanding its abuses the form of government was popular and that of the nobles dreaded; yet success would still have been certain had every conspirator remained true and firm to his resolution; but as there is generally some feeble link in a long chain, so is there a weak or repentant spirit in most conspiracies, a mind which unable to bear the pressure of the crisis yields to the force of circumstances.

The same Andrea Bardo whose peculiar wrongs amongst many others the insurrection was intended to redress, whether from remorse or a quarrel with his companions, revealed the whole to his brother-in-law Jacopo degli Alberti one of the ruling sect and therefore an intended victim. Alberti immediately informed the priors and preparations were instantly made to meet a danger more felt than distinctly apparent to the greater number of citizens: yet the city was soon in violent agitation no person knowing exactly how to act, from ignorance of facts, while both conspirators and priors were equally afraid to begin; the one from their premature detection, the other from apprehension of consequences. The conduct of the ruling chiefs was however decisive; they promptly repaired to the palace and almost by force caused the great bell to be sounded notwithstanding a strong opposition from Francesco Salviati and Taldo Valori one a prior the other gonfalonier, and both kinsmen of the Bardi. These men insisted on the imprudence of ringing the Campana on every slight occasion, as an armed multitude was always a dangerous auxiliary and more easily roused than calmed; it would therefore be wiser they said to search into the truth of the accusation and afterwards legally punish, than risk the destruction of Florence by an



ill-timed violence on the simple assertion of a single individual. Their words were plausible but the motives probably appreciated, for their voice was drowned in loud and universal reproaches of folly and presumption; and a resolution for an immediate attack on the conspirators was carried by acclamation. No sooner had the deep tones of the Campana rang out the alarm than the town as if by magic was everywhere and at the same moment in agitation and all the people armed: horse and man were soon arrayed before the public palace, each civic company under its own standard, and loud cries of "*Long live the People*" and "*Let the Traitors die*" echoed in every street, while the stormy crash of the Campana jarred on the ears of many a still unconscious citizen. The gates were promptly shut to cut off all communication from without, for the country was full of armed bands marching from every side and concentrating on the capital, but still too distant to coöperate. The conspirators seeing their plot discovered, their allies far away, and no signs of revolt on the right bank of the river where the people were most powerful, determined to sell their lives as dearly as they could, or if possible maintain themselves on the left bank until succours arrived. The bridge-heads of the Ponte Vecchio and La Trinità which had remained in wood since the great flood were instantly fired, and from the adjoining houses a shower of arrows poured down on every other approach: the position was strong, and easily tenable against all the adverse force had their cause been popular; but the nobles were feared and hated and the people of Oltrarno remained true to themselves and their party with which they felt even a bad government to be identified: it was still democracy against aristocracy, a common bond of feeling and principle, that even the tyranny of a Gabrielli was not sufficient to untie. The inhabitants rose to a man, mustered under their own banner, boldly attacked the conspirators, extinguished the fire, took both bridges, and then being joined by their fellow-citizens, who after

a hard fight had forced the Ponte alla Carraia, together pushed on the attack with bolder spirit. The bridge of Rubaconte was still fiercely defended, but the conspirators being now assailed both in flank and rear, were finally driven to the castellated houses and towers in the Via de' Bardi, the strongest part of their position, where they struggled long and obstinately, especially at the bridge which their antagonists were exerting every effort to possess. Meanwhile Gabrielli d' Agobbio feeling that he would fall the first sacrifice to victory on the adverse side, stood trembling and stupified in the midst of his guards before the palace without making effort in favour of the government: not so the Podestà Maffeo da Ponte Caredi of Brescia, who all unarmed as he was, instantly putting himself at the head of a few horsemen hurried to the scene of action and advancing alone over the bridge amidst a flight of arrows with outstretched arm demanded a parley.

His high station, his boldness, and venerable character excited instantaneous admiration and respect; the combat stopped, the revolted chiefs crowded round him, and his firm and earnest expression of wisdom and humanity, was listened to with silent attention.

" If I were conscious," he is made to say, " if I were con-
" scious O most noble citizens of ever having done aught to
" injure one of you in the exercise of those duties attached to
" the high station where your voices have placed me, or if I
" had even suffered wrong from any of yourselves, certes I
" would not now appear almost unarmed in the midst of you
" and expose myself either to your vengeance for the former,
" or your mistrust on account of the latter. But as my inno-
" cence gives me the confidence to come and reason with you,
" even here in the middle of hostile spears, so do I hope that
" your consciousness of never having injured me, will assure
" you that I am only come for the purpose of benefiting your-
" selves: if then you have this reliance in my motives, resign

" these dangerous arms which are even less hurtful to your " antagonists than to you, I do not only mean if you be over- " come, which you must necessarily be, but even if you remain " victorious in this unnatural conflict.—Will your families " rejoice in your victory?—Have you not sisters, wives, and " daughters of the same blood as that which you now have " dared to shed? How can you rejoice in a victory that will " make them weep for fathers brothers and nephews slain by " their kinsmen's swords! Will you not respect their sorrow? " Lay down these arms then, since certain victory were it even " now in your hands, can bring nothing but crime and misery. " But I will not deceive you; there is no hope; the succours " you expected come not, and were they come where would " they find an entrance when every gate is in the hands of the " citizens? The bridges are all occupied; the whole Sesto of " Oltrarno is in the power of your enemies except this single " street; and can this single street long resist the power of " the whole Florentine people? It would be folly to believe " so!—But if on the other hand you expect, as you must ex- " pect, to be overcome, what are you resolved on? Are you so " blinded by fury that you cannot behold your own certain ruin; " can you not see the plundering, the conflagration, the mur- " ders, the carnage that will shortly fill this unhappy street; " or do you believe that the people will be more merciful to " you than what they have persuaded themselves you by your " conspiracy intended to be towards them? Believe rather " that such men will be so much the more cruel to you than " you would ever have been to them, because the lower classes " and mere populace are commonly more ferocious than those " of noble blood; poverty makes them rapacious; licence, " anger, fierceness, impunity, all will drive them on to every " devilish act however daring and horrible! You will see " the ancient mansions of your forefathers plundered burnt " and destroyed with all their treasures! What do I say?

" These are trifles that may be restored; but you will see your " wives, your daughters, your children, all mercilessly butchered, " and then your own selves will follow! Shun, fly from such " horrors; provide for your safety ere this, and worse evils, " that I shudder to think of, fall upon you! With all my " power and influence; if you will only accept my mediation, " I will honestly assist you, and if I cannot obtain your entire " pardon I will at least secure for you a safe and unmolested " retreat."

The sad reality of his words and full confidence in his sincerity overcame the conspirators; their spirit bowed to discretion and he became their advocate with an indignant people. Promptly returning to the priors he with equal success persuaded them to sanction the conditions offered, and the insurgents were allowed to retire to their castles the same night by the gate of Saint George without further molestation and almost without noise, under the safeguard of the Podestà. Agitation then gradually subsided, the city soon became tranquil, and on the following day legal prosecutions were commenced; but against those only who had actually taken up arms; after this each man laid aside his harness and all quietly returned to their usual occupations.

By the wisdom of one man Florence was thus saved from further bloodshed, but so many citizens of all ranks had been engaged more or less in the conspiracy without actually appearing in arms that it was deemed most prudent to restrict the condemnations to those only who on being called upon did not assist the government, or who had taken an active part against it in the insurrection. About thirty of the Bardi, Frescobaldi, and Rossi were declared rebels and the Guelphic cities of Tuscany and Lombardy, forbidden with greater malice than prudence, but with all the influence of Florence, to receive the fugitives: the latter thus hunted sought shelter at Pisa and the court of Avignon and became implacable enemies of their

native country: their houses were demolished their property confiscated; and both Mangona and Vernia were afterwards unjustly acquired by a forced sale (the latter after several months' siege) from Andrea and Piero de' Bardi.

About the same time another law was made which again forbid any Florentine to purchase or possess castles in a foreign state within twenty miles of the frontier; but not yet content, the Florentines with extreme arrogance condemned no less than nine of the Counts Guidi who had taken part in this conspiracy, and by such an insult made them still bitterer enemies of the republic. The Urban troops seem to have felt the want of more efficient arms in this sedition, for every citizen that could afford the expense was thenceforth required to furnish himself with a cuirass and steel helmet after the manner of the Flemmings, and six thousand cross-bows were immediately purchased at the public charge for their use.

Such was the conclusion of this alarming plot the result of general misrule and individual suffering: mild treatment would have done good, but the subsequent condemnations had only the effect of exciting new and augmented anger so as to produce a second attempt the following year, by which Schiatta de' Frescobaldi lost his head, and six other gentlemen of the Bardi, Frescobaldi, Pazzi, and Adimari families were condemned as rebels *.

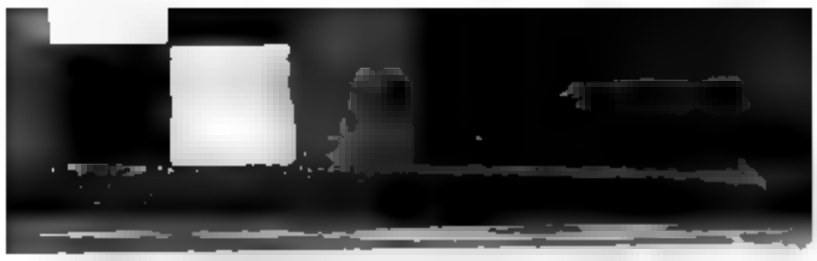
A.D. 1341. As nothing is more selfish, craving, and insatiable than power, a simple victory over their enemies was insufficient for the ruling faction, especially as their revenge had in the first moment of success been more restrained by fear and discretion than by clemency: not content there-

* To commemorate this escape of the city a solemn procession with offerings was ordered on the 26th November to be annually repeated on All Saints' day.—Annali di Simone della Tosa.—Gio. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. cxviii., cxix.—Istorie Pistolesi.—S. Ammirato, Lib. ix., p. 436.—N. Macchiavelli, Lib. iii°.

fore with one captain of the guard they replaced Gabrielli whose office had expired, by the creation of two, one for the city and one for the country; and having once broken the law by electing that miscreant they had no difficulty in again doing so by choosing his kinsman, Curràdo della Branca, to replace him. But as if conscious of their own turpitude in thus doubling this outrage on public opinion, they committed the country guard to a man whose character and recent services insured a just administration of its unconstitutional powers and Maffeo da Ponte Caredi was elected; yet even his integrity was insufficient either to calm the public mind or conceal the sinister objects of his employers. None whom the oligarchy even suspected were allowed a moment's rest, and the nobles became so much more than ever the victims of persecution, that they were ready to sell themselves and their country for one long refreshing draught of vengeance: they only waited, says Macchiavelli, for a fair occasion; "it came well; and they used it better" *.

While these events were passing in Tuscany the ill-luck of Mastino della Scala still clung to his Lombard policy: Parma and its territory formed the connecting link between his eastern and western states, and became so much the more valuable as it strengthened Lucca the possession of which gave him so firm a footing in Tuscany. To secure that important dominion he had given it in fief to his own uncles of the Correggio race, the deadly foes of the Rossi, and trusted to gratitude and relationship for its safety; but in those fierce times of ambition and romance, the ties of blood were often snapped in the start for power, and all moral considerations trampled in the race. Azzo de' Correggi the third of four brothers and the friend of Petrarch, disgusted at being compromised with the pope by the deception of Mastino in a certain negotiation wherein he was employed, made it a reason for revolting from the latter and

* Gio. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. cxxiii.—N. Macchiavelli, Lib. ii°.



aspiring to independent sovereignty: secretly demanding aid of Luchino Visconti who had succeeded his nephew in the lordship of Milan; also of the lord of Mantua, and Robert of Naples, with the covert approbation of Florence and the pope; he after a hard struggle succeeded in driving forth his nephew's garrison and along with his three brothers boldly assumed the government*.

Mastino who had already quarrelled with Milan and Mantua was not in a condition to recover this loss especially as the people hated him, and therefore, despairing of Lucca, now completely severed from his dominions, determined to sell it to the highest bidder whether Pisan or Florentine. Pisa dreading to see the power of Florence as it were fixed and watching at her very gates wished Lucca to be free and refused the purchase, but Florence was still determined on this acquisition at any price: Luchino Visconti offered her a thousand men-at-arms if she would break the peace with Mastino and besiege Lucca; mistrusting the motives of an old enemy the proposal was declined, and as dexterous traders the Florentines preferred the more business-like proceeding of a simple purchase. A commission of twenty citizens was formed in July 1341 to

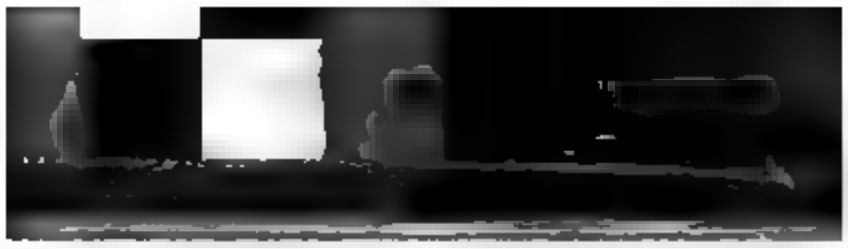
* The four Correggi governed well for a year and admitted Petrarch who was then on a visit to Azzo, into their councils. He wrote a Canzone on this occasion which is not generally printed with his other poetry, beginning "*Quel c' ha nostra natura*" in which he describes the liberation of the country and the fraternal union of the four Correggi in their public government thus:

"La patria tolta a l'unghie de' tiranni,
Liberamente in pace si governa,
E ristorando va gli antichi danni,
E riposando le sue parti stanche."
"E ringratiando la pietà superna,
Però ch' un' alma in quattro cori alberga,
Ed una sola verga,
È in quatro mani, ed un medesmo ferro."

Gio. Villani, Lib. xi, cap. cxxvii.—Istorie Pistolesi, An. 1341.—Muratori, Annali, An. 1341.—De Sade, Mem., Letter of Petrarch to Cardinal Colonna, vol. ii., Lib. iii., pp. 14, 17.

manage this transaction in all its consequences, with full powers to raise money for the purpose in any way they deemed fit; to make war or peace; form alliances; and attack whom and what they pleased for a whole year, without any subsequent responsibility. Such vast powers could scarcely work well, and the less honestly from their limited period; they were besides, the pure essence of faction and party aggrandisement and consequently engendered evil.

For Lucca, shorn as it was of some of its finest towns, 250,000 golden florins were offered and accepted, although Florence had still a debt of 400,000 hanging heavily on her resources for the cost of the late war; and this for a state once thought too dear, even with unviolated territory, at 80,000! Nor was this all, the purchase brought Florence into direct collision with Pisa a republic less powerful and opulent but equally brave and determined, and also justified in her opposition not only by the more legitimate motive of self-defence, but by the direct claim of a previous purchase for which the money had been actually paid in 1329. Fifty hostages, and amongst them the historian Giovanni Villani, were sent on the ninth of August to Ferrara under the Marquis of Este's protection, where sixty of equal rank arrived from Verona as pledges of mutual fidelity; and the bargain thus concluded, no bounds were set to the peculation and extravagance of the commissioners. War with Pisa being certain, troops were levied and preparations carried on so lavishly that their expenditure amounted to 30,000 florins a month besides the military assistance demanded from every ally of the republic. The sagacious and implacable Mastino in thus entangling Florence took ample vengeance for the late war and all he had suffered in consequence: he solaced himself with the thought of having sold to his enemy a ruined and besieged city at an excessive price, and of having by the same stroke involved her in a dangerous quarrel with Pisa and



other hostile states which he foresaw must ultimately be engaged in the dispute, for the Pisans whose treasury was then full determined with the aid of Visconti to substitute iron for gold in the acquisition of Lucca. They immediately raised twelve hundred men-at-arms besides three companies of civic Cavallate, and sent ambassadors to conclude a treaty of alliance with Milan: Luchino was well disposed; for besides his enmity to Mastino and consequent anger against Florence Pisa had otherwise won his goodwill and the former had not only rejected his proffered aid but by the purchase of Lucca relieved Mastino from the burden of its maintenance, and with the purchase money supplied him with new resources *.

Azzo Visconti who played so distinguished a part in the Ghibellin and Lombard wars died after nearly eleven years' sovereignty and in the flower of his age on the sixteenth of August 1339, with the reputation of a just and beneficent prince who possessed the then singular quality of really attending to the welfare of his people: he is described by cotemporary authors, besides his fine figure and noble aspect, as being gracious, good, wise, and adored by his subjects, three thousand of whom went into mourning at his death. Azzo had employed his mind and treasures on useful and beautiful works, and every one prospered under his government: Lord of Milan, Pavia, Cremona; Lodi Como Brescia and Bergàmo; besides Piacenza Vercelli and Vigevano; as he was the best so was he the first Visconte that was really sovereign of Milan. None of the Torriani, nor Ottone, nor Matteo, nor Galeazzo had yet dared to put their name on the national coinage; that of the city, the King of the Romans, the Emperor, or Saint Ambrose, being the common device; but Azzo boldly though cautiously, substituted his own alone, entwined by the Viscontine serpent †. Azzo's uncle and

* Ranieri Sardo, Cronaca Pisana, cap. lxxix.—Istorie Pistolesi, Tronci Annali Pisani, vol. iii.—Gio. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. cxxvii., cxxx.

† Notwithstanding the diminished power of the Emperors in Italy, they

successor Luchino was an austere but licentious man, who it is said, never pardoned nor was known to love anybody but his own children: jealous of Azzo's popularity he is described as hating and persecuting all his friends and ministers, yet continued his general plan of government with severe justice and great sagacity, without however being personally exempt from cruelty: but under his sway arts, science, commerce and refinement advanced, and Asti, Bobbio, Parma, Crema, Tortona, Novara and Alexandria were in various ways added to his dominions *.

Francesco da Postierla one of Azzo's friends and principal ministers had married Margherita Visconti a beautiful and virtuous woman whom Luchino wanted to seduce but failed in the attempt; her indignant husband taking advantage of the prince's unpopularity conspired with other offended nobles to depose him and place Matteo, Bernabo', and Galeazzo, his three nephews at the head of affairs. The plot was discovered and Postierla escaped to Avignon, but Luchino never lost sight of him: by a forged letter in the name of Mastino della Scala he was insidiously invited under flattering promises to Verona: having arrived at Marseilles he found there a Pisan galley, sent at his own request with the assurance it is said of that state's protection; but no sooner was he landed than arrested, and being hurried away as a prisoner to Milan suffered decapitation along with his innocent wife and many of his friends and adherents. This was the peculiar service that cemented Luchino Visconti's new alliance with Pisa; yet the extreme treachery attributed by Villani to the latter seems at least but doubtful; the Pisans and Florentines hated each

were still feared, and Azzo therefore did not venture at once to assert his independence by too bold an assumption of the high prerogative of coining money in his own name. He first merely added the initials A. Z., then omitted the Emperor's name, and finally his own name and device alone remained to stamp the coin of Milan.

* Corio, Hist. di Milano, Parte iii^a, fol. 216.—Pietro Verri, Stor. di Milano, vol. ii., cap. x., p. 133.

other with an intensity not yet entirely evaporated, and therefore all such assertions must be received with caution; Muratori does not notice it; but of Postierla's arrest and delivery to Luchino by the Pisans there is no reason to doubt, any more than the subsequent tragedy *.

A general council was assembled in the cathedral of Pisa to discuss the policy of war, where according to a chronicle of that city as quoted by Sismondi, Giovanni Buonconti Prior of the *Anziani* addressed his fellow-citizens as follows. "Seignors, "we have now assembled you to announce the purchase of "Lucca by Florence! The Florentines intend that this acqui- "sition shall throw open the gates of Pisa to their arms; and "already do they menace our city with barricades even at the "foot of its walls, in order to starve us into slavery; and when "we shall be reduced to surrender they mean to destroy "the ramparts, raze the principal quarters to the ground and "preserving one alone give it the name of Firenzuola. It re- "mains for yourselves to judge of what it may now become "you to do." At these words, rather addressed to the actual passions of the audience than to truth, a general feeling of indignation pervaded the assembly and the cathedral rang with cries of war; yet Giovanni Benigni who prospered as advocate of the Florentines at Pisa was bold enough to make one unsuccessful attempt at a peaceful settlement †. "Seignors," said he, "you well know the present power of the Florentine

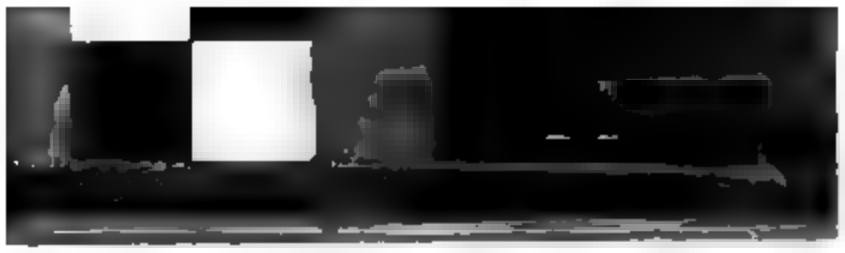
* Gio. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. cxxxi.—Corio, Parte iii., fol. 217.—S. Ammirato, Lib. ix., p. 443.—Muratori, Annali, Anno 1340.—P. Verri, Storia di Milano, vol. ii., cap. xii., p. 140.

† In these days every free city had what was called an "*advocate*" or consul resident in every neighbouring state, whose duty was to send minute accounts of all that occurred day by day, and also act in some sort as an envoy, by declaring in the public councils the commissions intrusted to him; and, according to Roncioni, Gio. Benigni convoked this council and began the debate. Buonconti answered him, both speeches being alike in substance but not in words to the above. — *Roncioni, Istorie Pisane*, Lib. xiii., p. 780.—Parte I., vol. vi., *Archivio Storico Italiano*. Roncioni also places the meeting of this assembly during the siege of Lucca, but before war was declared.

" republic for you behold her in close alliance with most of " the Tuscan states; with several in Lombardy; with Bologna; " and lastly with Robert of Naples; and to the sagacity of the " Florentines you are I believe no strangers. I from the " affection I bear to my country would be a negligent and " undutiful citizen if I did not attempt to dissuade you from " this useless war, which with certain and infinite misery will " bring uncertainty in everything else except the expense. And " although the Florentines have purchased the state of Lucca, " only let us remain at peace and we may fairly expect that " they will prove good neighbours; for it is not their custom " to molest others without provocation." Benigni was not without supporters, but Giovanni Vernagalli a man of weight and prudence, demonstrated with great earnestness the justice and necessity of war on the principle of self-preservation, and the question was carried almost by acclamation *.

The bad policy of exasperating a body so powerful as the recent exiles of Florence now became apparent: for Guelphs as they were, having been excluded by Florentine influence from the Guelphic states, most of them in despair sought and received shelter at Pisa and were indefatigable in securing the assistance of all those barons who had joined in their recent conspiracy. The Pisan league was now therefore becoming formidable; for besides Milan, Parma, Padua, and Mantua, all enemies of Mastino; Simone Boccanegra the newly elected and first Doge of Genoa, joined this confederacy: and by the means of Florentine exiles, the Counts Guidi, the Ubaldini, Ordelaffi lord of Forli, with all the Ghibelines of Romagna and Tuscany were added to the list. The contingent of Luchino alone for which he was to have 50,000 florins, amounted to a thousand men-at-arms under his kinsman Giovanni Visconti d' Oleggio; and five hundred and fifty more cavalry were sent

* Cronaca di Pisa apud Sismondi, vol. iv., p. 164.—Tronci, Annali Pisani, vol. iii.



from the other Lombard allies, so that independent of the Genoese cross-bows, a body of three thousand men-at-arms were soon assembled. A national force composed almost entirely of civic troops had about the middle of August entered the Lucchese territory, and by bribery obtained possession of Cerruglio and Monte Carlo; then marching directly on Lucca invested that city. With wonderful rapidity they surrounded it by a fortified line twelve miles long composed of two deep palisaded ditches inclosing a broad space on which the armies of Lombardy and Pisa were separately encamped and impervious to any sudden attack from within or without. The prompt formation and rapid movement of this army took Florence by surprise; she had nothing ready to oppose it, nor even sufficient force at hand to take possession of Lucca had the road been open; but no time was now lost; two thousand horse were quickly raised; and in consequence of a league formed in the preceding June with Naples, Perugia, Siena, Bologna and Ferrara, though purely defensive against the emperor or any other prince coming with an armed force into Italy, gave her an increased command of friendly assistance *. Summonses were despatched to all her numerous allies demanding prompt succours in case of war being declared by Pisa, and so great was her influence that Siena, Perugia, Agobbio, Bologna, Ferrara, Verona, Volterra, Prato, San Gimignano, Colle, the Guelphs of Romagna, and even the Ghibeline Tarlati of Pietramala, all poured in their forces, until the united army amounted to between three and four thousand men-at-arms and ten thousand infantry, under the chief command of Matteo da Ponte Caradi the late Podestà †.

Although a valiant and good soldier, Matteo was unequal either from his rank or talents to the conduct of such an army; the former indeed was an object of scarcely less importance

* S. Ammirato, Lib. ix., p. 441.

† Rondoni calls him Maffeo Ponteca-valli, and dates this in 1342. I follow Ammirato.

than the latter for the maintenance of discipline at a period when so many of the highest nobility and even sovereign princes hired themselves out as Condottieri with more or less of followers, and could ill brook obedience to a general of inferior rank although invested with all the authority of so powerful a republic. Villani asserts that there were above fifty captains in the army more fitted to command than he, but that the ambition of the twenty war commissioners repulsed wiser counsel and was even deaf to King Robert's advice who strongly protested against the Lucchese expedition altogether; wherefore they refused to have any of that royal family or nation as generalissimo of the league.

Having previously sent an embassy to make a formal protest against the warlike proceedings of Pisa, the Florentine army concentrated at Fucecchio and thence crossed the Pisan frontier, took Pontadera and the Fosso Arnonico; burned the towns of Cascina, Sancasciano, and San Donnino, and wasted all the Contado as far as Borgo delle Campane only two miles from the capital: after this insult they turned short round towards the Val d' Era, plundered burned and ruined all that country unopposed as far as Ponte di Sacco and continued the campaign until heavy rains compelled them to return to their quarters in and about Fucecchio. This inroad produced no decisive result; much misery was inflicted, the besiegers were not provoked to quit their entrenchments, and the war remained as before: the general was accused of ignorance; the war commissioners of obstinacy; for they had been already informed by the most experienced soldiers that the true base of operations, in order to raise the siege of Lucca, was on the Fosso Arnonico where good quarters and provisions abounded, and where the position could have been easily strengthened on the side of Pisa. They were advised to occupy Pontadera in force, strengthen its works, construct a redoubt at Castello del Bosco, leaving a sufficient garrison to secure the communica-

tions with Florence, and then frequent and effective inroads might have been safely made even to Porto Pisano and Leghorn, as well as in every other direction round Pisa, by passing the Arno on temporary bridges, scouring the Val-di-Serchio, and cutting off all communication between the besieging army and the capital: this, as was afterwards confirmed by the Pisans themselves, would quickly have raised the siege and forced them to an engagement with inferior numbers.

A.D. 1341.

Mastino, who appears to have been justly accused of a malicious union of vengeance and profit in his compact with Florence, now insisted on her occupying Lucca and its subject towns under the threat of instantly selling that state to Pisa with whom he was in constant negotiation. This ill-timed demand occasioned much discussion, as well on the impossibility of complying as because numbers had opened their eyes to the folly of purchasing at an exorbitant price a place actually blockaded by a powerful and determined enemy; and many were the voices for an instantaneous dissolution of the compact accompanied by a vigorous prosecution of the war against Pisa in her own territory. Such a proceeding was justified on the ground that the Veronese chief had not fulfilled his promise as he should have done by the delivery of Lucca and its dependencies unfettered into the hands of the Florentines: but once more the intrigues of the war commissioners and their adherents silenced wiser counsel and alleged that the national honour would be tarnished by a timorous relinquishment of the enterprise. A resolution to gain better terms was however carried in the assemblies, and two ambassadors were ordered to return with those of Verona as far as Ferrara, where by the mediation of Obizzo of Este, and considering the loss of Cerruglio and Monte Carlo, the price was reduced to 180,000 florins; 100,000 of which was to be paid in a year and the rest in five; but Mastino became bound to maintain a body of five hundred horse in the Florentine service while the siege of Lucca continued. It

is said that a much better bargain might have now been made had the Florentines shown less eagerness; for Mastino exasperated at the Pisans for their close alliance with his enemy Luchino, never intended to put his threats into execution: but the commissioners were dishonest if Villani, a shrewd and close observer, may be credited. He says there was strong reason to believe that Mastino would not have received more than 200,000 florins of the original purchase-money had it been paid, and was even ignorant of the greater sum being in question, the commissioners of both sides having cut across each other like scissors and clipped the public interest in passing.

The Florentine army was ordered to march on Lucca in two divisions and reunite at a place called Colle delle Donne in the Val di Pescia about eight miles from the capital, the camp being formed at Gragnano only a few miles from the enemy: here the possession of Barga and Pietra Santa was formally received from Mastino's commissioners by a council of two deputies from each Sesto of Florence, which was now attached to the army with more embarrassment than military knowledge. The besiegers had hitherto maintained a blockade in three separate divisions, but on the enemy's appearance concentrated their whole force on a single point which enabled the Florentines by preconcerted signals to penetrate their partially unguarded lines and throw eight hundred men into the citadel while Mastino's garrison evacuated the place by the same operation.

These troops were accompanied by Giovanni de' Medici, Naddo de' Rucellai and Rosso de' Ricci as syndics of the republic which thus found herself in possession of the so long coveted city, of which Giovanni de' Medici assumed the military command, the other two remaining as treasurers and commissiaries for the garrison. In defiance of the besiegers, and the frequent skirmishes between outposts besides the loss of Fort Pontetetto on the Ozzori torrent, they managed to

receive regular and constant supplies of money from their own camp, by which a continual flow of provisions was attracted from the enemy's German troops who caring little about final results made the most of their position and opportunities. The Pisans might thus have been tired out and their supplies gradually cut off without any fears for the besieged who had eight months' provisions; but the impatience of faction could only be satisfied by a general battle which was therefore peremptorily commanded. This unluckily happened at the very moment when Giovanni Visconti disgusted with the Pisans for failing in some part of their agreement, was as he afterwards declared, on the point of quitting the service and returning to Milan. Nevertheless obedience became necessary and on the first of October the army descended to San Piero a Vico near the river Serchio in the plain of Lucca and sent a challenge to their opponents: the Pisans were far from declining a battle and both armies levelled the intervening ground for the combat, a practice common in that age; the besiegers moreover demolished a great part of their external lines for the sake of freer movement in case of a repulse, and both sides prepared for a general engagement.

The Florentine army of two thousand eight hundred men-at-arms with a numerous infantry* drew up in two lines, the Feditori flanked by three thousand crossbow-men consisted of twelve hundred gentlemen principally Tuscans and amongst them two hundred and fifty Senese of high rank who, having been knighted immediately before the action, swore to maintain the honour of their spurs, and well redeemed the pledge. Behind these fluttered a line of various-coloured banners supported by the second division which was a solid body of troops including all the rest of the army both

* Sardo (*Cronaca Pisana*) says that the Florentines had 4000 horse and more than 30,000 foot; the Pisans 3100 cavalry and 20,000 infantry. (Cap. lxxix., p. 112.)

cavalry and infantry; in rear of all stood the loaded baggage train which seems still to have been destined as a rallying point in case of misfortune. The Pisans with nearly equal numbers and better bowmen, were drawn up in three lines, their Feditori eight hundred strong being led by the Captain-General Nolfo da Montefeltro and Arrigo Castracani, flanked by strong bands of native and Genoese crossbow-men, both famous in that day. Giovanni Visconti at the head of eighteen hundred Milanese and German cavalry and all the infantry, led the second division under his uncle's banner, while a reserve of four hundred men-at-arms kept within the lines to hold the garrison in check and serve as a rallying point for fugitives; these were commanded by Ciupo degli Scolari and Francesco Castracani, the former a Ghibeline exile of Florence, the latter an independent chieftain and cousin of Castruccio. Both armies being prepared the trumpets sounded and the Feditori in a single line gathered up their reins and lowering their lances dashed forward as if at a tournament, but the Pisans met them so roughly as to make everything tremble: the Florentines were repulsed but soon rallying charged again and again and the battle became obstinate; man to man, and horse to horse, the ground was long and stoutly contested, until the Pisans, borne down by weight and numbers, were sent headlong back upon their line of standards. The Florentines then drove like a tempest on their enemy's main battle where a rough and determined struggle with great honour on every side, doubtfully maintained the conflict; the crossbow-men soon wheeled up on either flank and shot so fast and well together that horse and man came to the ground like grass from the mower's scythe: the Florentine ranks were wasting fast, when by a final effort this line too was broken; Visconti and his standard taken; and Arrigo Castracani, the exile Baldo Frescobaldi, with many other chiefs and men of lesser note made prisoners. The day seemed now to be

won and in this belief the gallant Feditori relaxed their order to secure their prisoners: but all this while the main battle of Florence looked on inactive and the fugitives rallied on their reserve within the camp where we are told that Ciupo degli Scolari who had been quietly watching the fight, after repulsing a sally of the garrison, seized on this crisis to let loose a number of camp-followers at full speed upon the Florentine baggage with loud cries that the Feditori were beaten and the battle lost: and this so scared the guard that panic-struck the whole train broke into sudden confusion and dispersed. The Florentine main battle which was drawn up full one third of a mile from the point of conflict, seeing this false attack and consequent tumult in their rear, and deceived by the disorder in front, where their squadrons, broken and mingled with the enemy, seemed already beaten while his third line showed a firm, steady, and increasing front; instead of advancing as they should, turned like cowards and fled in disorder with all the infantry at their heels.

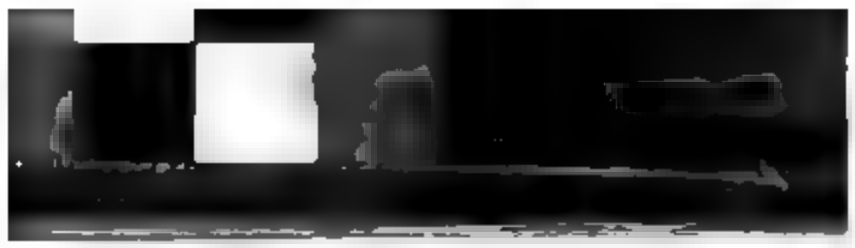
Ciupo and Francesco Castracani observing the success of this stratagem fell with their fresh squadrons on the dispersed and tired though victorious Florentines, recovered every prisoner except Visconti, who had been hurried off to the rear, and after another obstinate struggle completely defeated them. The slaughter of men according to Florentine writers was not great for their armour was generally impervious to arrows; but two thousand five hundred horses lay dead on the field by bolts from Genoese and Pisan crossbows, which says the Istorie Pistolesi were on that day the real workers of victory. There were scarcely a thousand prisoners made in all, but amongst them the Florentine general and some Veronese gentlemen of high rank; for the main body retreated unmolested to Pescia while many broke through the hostile lines and sheltered themselves in Lucca: the Pisans had the honour and advantage of the day but are supposed by

Florentine writers to have lost more men and horses than the defeated army *.

The first news of this victory was of course mingled with great exaggerations both at Ferrara and Florence; in the former city the hostages gave themselves up for lost, under the idea that Florence was entirely disabled, and Giovanni Villani relates a conversation between himself and one of his companions characteristic of the time and country. A.D. 1341.

His fellow-hostage on the news of this defeat said "'Thou "'O Giovanni, hast made many records of our past history "'and the other great events of the age; now say what can "'be the reason that God has permitted this misfortune to "'befal us, the Pisans being greater sinners than ourselves "'as well in perfidy as having always been enemies and per-"'secutors of the holy church while we have ever been obe-"'dient to it and even its benefactors?' We replied to "this question as God beyond our small amount of knowledge "inspired us; saying, 'That with us there prevailed one "'little sin amongst others, that displeased God more than "'those of the Pisans; that is to say the being destitute of "'either faith or charity.' The gentleman somewhat cho-"leric, rejoined 'Why do you particularly mention charity "'when more of it is given away in one day at Florence than "'at Pisa in a month?' I replied, 'You speak true, but "'as a reward for that branch of charity which is called alms "'God has protected and will continue to protect us from "'greater perils; but real charity is wanting amongst us; "'first towards God because we are not thankful enough for

* Sardo and Roncioni say that the battle was fought on 2nd of October 1342. Tronci agrees with the Florentine writers by placing it under the year 1341, but the Pisans began their year differently from any other people. —Ranciri Sardo, Cronaca Pisana, vol. vi., Parte ii^a, Arch. Stor. Ital.—Roncioni Istor. Pisan., Lib. xii., p. 784. Arc. Stor Ital.—Istorie Pistolesi.—Gio. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. cxxxiv.—Leon Aretino, Lib. vi.—Tucci, Storia Antica di Lucca, MS.—S. Ammirato, Lib. ix., p. 446.—Tronci Annali di Pisa, vol. iii., Anno 1341.



" 'so many benefits conferred; moreover because we have
" 'exalted our city to such a height; also by our presumption
" 'in not being contented with our present boundaries and are
" 'coveting not only Lucca but other towns and cities unlaw-
" 'fully. How charitable we were with our neighbours is
" 'manifest to all by our meddling with and betraying each
" 'other; by one neighbour endeavouring to ruin his compa-
" 'nion, consort, and even his own brother; and by our
" 'infamous wronging of the weak and unprotected. Fidelity
" 'and charity towards our own republic and particular com-
" 'munity have also manifestly vanished; but the time of our
" 'misfortunes is come: each citizen in order to satisfy his
" 'own petty desires and serve his personal interests will frau-
" 'dulently usurp and expose to sale the most important offices
" 'of the state and the consequent danger to the common-
" 'wealth is never thought of. But the Pisans are the reverse,
" 'they are united amongst themselves and faithful to their
" 'country, although in other respects they are as great or
" 'greater sinners than ourselves: but our Lord Jesus Christ
" 'says in the Evangelist, "I will punish my enemy with my
" 'enemy."' Silence being thus put to these questions each
" remained satisfied with the explanation; we acknowledged
" our defects and agreed that little charity was amongst us
" either in community or individually" *.

This defeat at first filled Florence with dismay, but the truth restored tranquillity; shops were reopened, trade resumed, and each citizen pursued his usual occupations as if nothing had occurred to disturb them, while government took instant measures to assemble a more powerful army: assistance was promptly demanded from King Robert and other allies, new levies were made; and merely because he happened to be nearest at hand, Malatesta da Rimini a man of warlike reputation was raised to the chief military command. He arrived in

* Gio. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. cxxxvi.

February 1342 and although his reputation raised some expectations of success the people were not the less anxious to have a Neapolitan prince as their generalissimo: A.D. 1342. disappointed in this but learning that the Duke of Athens was coming from France certain Florentines wrote secretly to offer him the chief command, which, being needy he accepted without hesitation and repairing to Naples, but keeping his motives secret, provided himself with men and horses on pretence of recovering his estates in Attica which were then held by the royal family of Sicily.

Meanwhile King Robert, now grown very old and avaricious, was entreated by the Florentines to send a royal prince and troops to their assistance, but averse to the expense, yet loth to mortify so old a friend, a proposal was made which he thought could not be entertained for a moment and would therefore either remove the dilemma or repay him if accepted. A formal embassy was accordingly despatched to demand from Florence the possession and lordship of Lucca as it stood in 1313, and on these conditions promised his aid both by sea and land against Pisa; Robert did not conceive it possible that Florentine pride would ever stoop to such terms, but he was mistaken; the citizens were all too anxious for his help, too eager for war; they saw clearly through him but knew that he could not live long, and at once acquiesced. Surprised at their success the Neapolitan ambassadors repaired directly to Pisa and sternly demanded that the siege of Lucca should be raised as now forming part of their master's dominions: the Pisans uncertain whether this were not a stratagem of Florence yet fearful of offending so powerful a prince, respectfully answered that their reply should be made by a special embassy, and thus gained time but pressed the siege with redoubled vigour. The Florentines urged King Robert to fulfil his promise, but still unwilling to spend money he held cautiously back and all they could accomplish, instead of a royal prince and army, was to get six hundred cavalry under the Duke of Athens, half the

expense being paid by themselves. This disgraceful conduct, especially the denial of naval succours, was considered as the cause of all subsequent disasters, and so high was public indignation that surmounting ancient enmity, and in concert with Mastino della Scala, ambassadors were actually despatched to the Emperor Louis at Trent and a negotiation commenced by which he engaged to recall the Germans from Pisa and send a force to Tuscany in aid of Florence. His ambassadors had been received there with public honours and every other mark of friendship in 1341, and fifty knights besides divers gentlemen of high rank actually joined the Florentine army. Everything therefore seemed tending to a closer union, when a change in German affairs with the usual apprehensions of Ghibeline ascendancy at Florence arrested this strange connexion, and the counsel of cooler but more determined Guelphs carried a decree to prosecute the Pisan war with national resources alone.

The fame of so unexpected a transaction however soon spread over Italy; and it was probably on this occasion that Petrarca assailed it with all the fire of a poet and a patriot *. Robert of Naples became alarmed, and many of his rich nobles and prelates with large sums in the hands of Florentines, apprehensive of consequences, suddenly withdrew their deposits. This caused so rapid a drain on the city that coupled with heavy taxation and the subsequent loss of Lucca, many of the first banking-houses were compelled to stop payment and ruined smaller merchants in their fall. Amongst them are the names of Peruzzi and Bardi, who appear to have quickly resumed business after their recent failure; also the Acciauioli, Buon-

* Canz. "*Italia mia.*"—

Nè v'accorgete ancor, per tante prove,
Del Bavarico inganno
Ch' alzando 'l dito, con la morte scherza, &c.

De Sade (Mem. pour La Vie de Petrarque, vol. ii., Lib. iii.) places this spirited Canzone in the year 1344, but I think with insufficient reason.

accorsi, Cocchi, Antellesi, Uzzàni, Corsini, Castellani, Perendoli and many others: the mischief spread, specie failed, goods were offered at Florence for half their former value and found no purchaser, while in the country prices fell still lower. Nevertheless the Florentines pertinaciously adhered to their great object, and marching from Val-di-Nievole on the twenty-seventh of March began the campaign of 1342 with more than two thousand foreign veterans in their pay. Forty gentlemen of Florence accompanied the army with their followers as volunteers, and a board of six deputies was attached to the council of war: besides these, upwards of two thousand more cavalry were supplied by the allies without reckoning the infantry of Counts Guidi, which alone amounted to ten thousand men, besides a numerous militia from the district and contado of Florence itself.

In the old position of Gragnano Malatesta remained idle for six weeks; and though commanding so fine an army trusted more to intrigue than action: but his kinsman Nolfo di Montefeltro the Pisan general was also from Romagna and quite as expert in all the duplicity for which that province was notorious: the troops therefore remained unoccupied and Florence naturally became suspicious and discontented. The enemy far more active succeeded in inducing Piero Saccone with all his clan, and even Arezzo itself, to meditate a revolt; but Guglielmo degli Altoviti averted this danger by that chief's arrest along with three kinsmen, all of whom he sent prisoners to Florence where they narrowly escaped execution. The rest of that family fled to their castles and broke out into open revolt: but the example spread; the Ubaldini with some aid from Milan, besieged Firenzuola and beat a detachment which was marching to its assistance under one of the Medici; the town fell by treachery, was plundered and burnt, and the Pazzi and Ubertini of Vald'arno took prompt advantage of this success to raise an insurrection in that province, by which Castiglione, Campogiallo, and Treggiaia were soon wrested from the Florentines.

Finding that all his intrigues were baffled by a counter-working deeper than his own Malatesta moved on the ninth of May to San Piero in Campo on the Serchio, about two miles from the enemy; here he was reënforced by the seventy-five German knights and gentlemen-at-arms already mentioned; here also were the Florentines joined by Walter de Brienne titular Duke of Athens with a hundred retainers on horseback in their pay. This is he who in 1326 had acquired some popularity as the Duke of Calabria's lieutenant at Florence; and as one who was on the point of playing so desperate a game in her domestic policy may here be further noticed.

We learn from Ducange, as quoted by Sismondi, that Walter de Brienne was born in Greece of that mixed race which sprung up after the first crusade from the intermarriages of a European and an Asiatic population, and were designated by the appellation of "*Pullani.*" His father was driven from Athens by the great company of Catalans in 1312 but retained the duchy of Lecce in Puglia as his patrimony. The Catalans having submitted to Frederic King of Sicily in 1326, that monarch's three sons successively took the title of Duke of Athens and steadily ruled the principality. Walter nevertheless had favour from the kings of France and Naples, wherefore the Florentines hoped finally to overcome King Robert's avarice by treating the friend of a deceased son and the man whom he had himself named as his lieutenant, with peculiar distinction. Brienne was of small stature and revolting aspect; of a cautious but false disposition, a treacherous heart and dissolute manners: no morals, no religion; nothing ever checked his ambition except avarice, and of all the good qualities that might have illustrated his progenitors, their valour only became this man's inheritance. Such was he whose fatal connexion with Florence so unhappily recommenced at the disastrous investment of Lucca *.

* Sismondi, vol. iv., p. 170.—Roncioni, Istor. Pisane, Lib. xiii., Ar. Stor. Ital.

The army with great difficulty from rains and floods, crossed the river Serchio on the eleventh of May 1342, and after a useless offer of battle threatened the fortress and bridge of San Quilico; this drew forth troops from both armies and caused frequent skirmishes without any serious result. There were two bridges over the river both occupied by the Pisans, the Florentine army being posted between them and divided by the river from the enemy's camp which was in this part unfortified. Here therefore the great effort should have been made to throw supplies into Lucca; but Malatesta had lost time and the river continued high, so that the Pisans had four days' leisure to strengthen also this portion of their camp; but no sooner had the waters abated than a German knight dashed through the river with all his vassals and charged the new defences; the Duke of Athens as bravely followed, and their example led on others, until fifteen hundred men-at-arms and a more numerous infantry were hotly engaged and carried the enemy's entrenchments at the lance's point. Instead of supporting so spirited a charge Malatesta sounded the retreat and thus lost a second occasion of revictualling and probably raising the siege of Lucca, for he might previously have occupied this ground even before a single bulwark had been raised, when the garrison confidently allowed both armed and unarmed citizens, men and women, to issue out and satisfy their curiosity without any apprehension.

That night the Pisans repaired their works; rains and floods again poured down, and Malatesta either through indecision or treachery relinquished the enterprise and retreated to Cerruglio where he encamped on the twenty-first of May. After an unsuccessful attack on that place he retired to Fucecchio and thence ravaged the Pisan territory with some trifling advantage; meanwhile the Lucchese, seeing themselves so shamefully abandoned and having consumed their provisions, surrendered on the sixth of July 1342.

Thus with an army as powerful as that which conquered Mastino della Scala the Florentines were not only unable to raise the siege of Lucca but even to maintain that city against the inferior forces of Pisa! So hurtful is power without talent or the honesty to use it properly. But ill success was not confined to the army: during the delays of Malatesta negotiations had begun, and a treaty was almost concluded between Florence and Pisa by which the latter agreed to pay 180,000 florins and 10,000 a year in perpetuity, with a "*Palio*" and a steed in scarlet trappings, as marks of homage for the undisturbed possession of Lucca: this miscarried through the intrigues of Rucellai and his faction and with it every hope of accommodation.

For nearly thirteen years the Florentines had pursued this object with a perseverance worthy of a better cause and better fortune; but a fatality seemed to attend on all their actions. Lucca was destined to yield but not to them, and Villani takes care to remind us of his friend Dionesio del Borgo's prophecy, that Florence would have the lordship of Lucca "*from the hands of a man whose armorial bearings are red and black; but with great vexation, expense, and shame to your community.*" This he says was verified in the person of Guglielmo Scannacci degli Scannabecchi of Bologna, Mastino's commissioner; whose device was a black goat on a red field, and he certainly gave up Lucca to the Florentines with all the vexation, shame, and expense that had been predicted *.

CONTEMPORARY MONARCHS.—England: Edward III. — Scotland: David II. —France: Philip VI. of Valois.—Castile and Leon: Alphonso XI.—Aragon: Peter IV.—Portugal: Alphonso IV —German Empire: Louis of Bavaria.—Pope: Benedict XII.—Naples: Robert (the Good).—Sicily: Frederic II. (of Aragon) until 1337, then Peter II.—Greek Empire: Andronicus the younger until 1341, then John Palæologus.—Ottoman Empire: Orcan.

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* S. Ammirato, Stor., Lib. ix., p. 447. —Giov. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. cxxxix., cxl.—Ranieri, Sardo, Cron. Pisana, Lib. lxxix.—Raffaello Roncioni, Istorie Pisane, Lib. xiii.—Tronci, Annali Pisani, vol. iii°, p. 171.

CHAPTER XX.

FROM A.D. 1342 TO A.D. 1344.

THE repeated disasters and ultimate failure of this war produced their usual effects on the public mind and Florence teemed with abuse both of the government and the twenty commissioners who had conducted it; shame, vexation, and augmented debt were its only acknowledged results, and every public and private assembly even the very shops and markets rang with unmeasured expressions of disgust. The ascendant faction therefore determined by an immediate change of rulers, either to overawe the citizens, as in the time of Gabrielli d' Agubbio, or endeavour to cast off their unpopularity by directing public attention to the conduct of another who as the ruling power could scarcely escape censure however faultless his conduct. The behaviour of Walter de Brienne had once prepossessed all Florence in his favour, and his recent gallantry at Lucca had renewed old impressions; he was therefore, towards the end of May made "*Captain and Conservator of the people*," to which after the termination of Malatesta's engagement, was added his military command and along with it almost unlimited authority within and without the city. Florence at this epoch contained three factions, two of which were active and powerful. First the nobility; driven to desperation by an implacable democracy; secondly the "*Popolani Grassi*" or opulent burgesses who had monopolized all power emolument and public honours, and were fast A.D. 1342.

reducing the commonwealth to what may be called a close corporation with its accustomed evils. Alike obnoxious to nobles and people, they persecuted the one, insulted the other, and oppressed both, wherefore the advancement of Walter was a popular act by which every class expected to profit; it was a change; and changes after misfortune often come with a brighter aspect than they may always deserve.

The first measures of de Brienne were equally agreeable to the two extremes of faction, but filled the centre with dismay: Giovanni de' Medici late governor of Lucca and one of the most powerful of their number; had his head chopped off in August, chiefly on an accusation, which he was made by torture to own, of having through bribery allowed one of the Tarlati to escape from Lucca when that family revolted. Immediately afterwards Guglielmo degli Altoviti suffered a like sentence for peculation while governing Arezzo; but it was generally believed that the gold of Pietramala whose chiefs he had sent prisoners to Florence influenced the Duke of Athens in this condemnation. Naddo de' Rucellai and Rosso de' Ricci were the next victims: accused of bribery and peculation at Lucca both received sentence of death, and escaped only through the power of their families by paying enormous fines besides exile and imprisonment, for prudence not mercy induced the Duke to spare them. Affectation of modesty or a deeper cunning had made him choose the Franciscan convent of Santa Croce for his ordinary residence; it was a mendicant order and denoted humility, and the ample space in front of that building favoured the meetings of those numerous popular assemblies by which he intended to work out his designs; as the examples he had already made were amongst the most powerful of the obnoxious class Walter de Brienne was hailed by the populace and more than the populace, as an impartial determined man who would distribute what they called justice with a fearless hand; for justice and tyranny are as easily confounded, when applied by

a discontented people to their rulers, as in their application to the same people by a cruel and arbitrary government*.

The terror of those who had invested de Brienne with this authority was only equalled by their astonishment in finding themselves the first objects of his tyranny, and his confidential intercourse with the nobles completed their dread of what was likely to follow. He was eagerly courted by the latter and urged to make himself Lord of Florence, for he had promised to abolish in their favour the detested ordinances of justice: to the burgher families; particularly the Peruzzi, Antellesi, Acciaiuoli, Buonaccorsi, Baroncelli and others, all deep in debt; he promised public assistance to save them from their creditors; to the lower classes he behaved with peculiar affability, and even familiarity: promising that they also should have a share in the commonwealth. Thus winning golden opinions from both ends of society he heard his name blessed while riding through the streets, and wherever he turned beheld his armorial bearings emblazoned either from love or fear, over every shop and palace in the capital. "*Erviva il giusto Signore*" was shouted whenever he presented himself, "*Long live the man who punishes the great without fear!*" His will was law, he was monarch in all but the name.

While things were in this palmy state the office of the Twenty expired; they had ruled the commonwealth more for their own views than the general good; had augmented taxes and increased the public debt: nothing prospered under them; and their very existence was an impediment to the Duke's ambition: trusting therefore both to the fear and goodwill that he had inspired in the various classes according to their peculiar expectations, Walter coolly requested from the priors the absolute and perpetual lordship of Florence. The astonished seignory would not listen for an instant to a demand that neither kings nor emperors had ever dared to make, and in

* Mar. di Coppo, Stefani, Lib. viii., Rub. 551.

defiance of his popularity plumply refused their consent. But Walter had better security: the nobles from anger: the bankrupt popolani from distress; and the poorer citizens and populace from detestation of the late commissioners; all offered him their armed assistance to carry out his views. With such encouragement he on his own authority summoned a general parliament to meet at Santa Croce and consider the public safety; this so alarmed the priors, whose permission was not even asked, that they deputed certain of their number to confer with him on the evening of the seventh of September and then addressed him thus. "We come to you O Seignor, moved first by your demand, "and secondly by the orders which you have issued to as "semble the people, because it appears certain that you wish "by extraordinary means to obtain that which we have refused "to your solicitations: nor is it our intention to oppose your "designs by force, but simply to demonstrate how heavy is the "burden that you are about to take upon your shoulders and "how dangerous the course you pursue; in order that you "may remember our advice along with that of those who "give a different counsel, not for your good but to satisfy their "own vengeance. You are trying to enslave a city that has "ever been free; for the power that we have occasionally con-"ferred on the Neapolitan monarchs was that of confraternity "not bondage. Have you seriously considered what in a city "like this may be the full strength and meaning of the word "'*Liberty!*' which no force conquers, no time consumes, and "no merit counterbalances! Think Sir, how much power it "needs to hold such a city in slavery! Your foreign guards "are insufficient; those within, you cannot trust; for the very "citizens who are now your friends and counsellors, so soon as "they by your help shall have subdued their adversaries will "seek means to extinguish you and seat themselves in your "place. The plebeians in whom you confide will turn at the "slightest accident, so that in a short time you may expect to

"see the whole city your enemy to its own and your ruin. "Nor will you be able to find a remedy for this evil; for "notwithstanding that those princes who have but few enemies "can secure their own authority by death and exile; yet amidst "universal hatred security was never found: it is never known "where mischief may begin, and he that fears all can be cer- "tain of none: Nay, if you attempt a remedy you increase the "danger, for those who remain become more bitter in their "hatred and more eager for revenge. That no time suffices to "exhaust the desire of freedom is certain, for we have frequent "examples of its resumption in cities whose living citizens "never enjoyed it and only loved the sound as they heard it "echoed by songs and traditions of their ancestors, yet when "once recovered preserved it with obstinacy against every in- "vader: and even if their fathers had not reminded them of it, "the public palaces the seats of justice and all the ensigns of "freedom would have done so, for all would have been eagerly "sought for and known by the citizens. But what peculiarly "good work have you ready to compensate for the lost sweet- "ness of liberty, or to destroy the public affection for our actual "state? Not even were you to add all Tuscany to Florence "and return in daily triumph from without would it avail you: "for that glory would not belong to them but to you, and the "citizens would not acquire subjects but fellow-servants by "whom their own servitude would be made more galling. And "though your conduct were even saintly, your manners cour- "teous, your judgments just; all this would not suffice to "make you beloved; if you believe otherwise you deceive "yourself, because every tie is irksome every chain heavy to "those who are accustomed to freedom. A good prince and a "turbulent people can hardly exist together, for they must soon "either be quickly assimilated or the one be soon overcome by "the other: wherefore you must resolve to retain this city "by violence; for which citadels guards and foreigners will

" scarcely avail; or else be satisfied with that authority which " we have already bestowed upon you. The latter we ad- " vise, with this warning, that voluntary obedience is alone " durable; and we urge you not to allow yourself, blinded by " ambition, to clamber up to a place where you can neither " remain nor pass, and therefore from which with infinite " mischief to yourself and us you must surely fall " *.

A long and protracted discussion followed and was finished by the execution of a compact confirmed by oaths which continued Walter de Brienne in absolute power, with the jurisdiction and allowances before enjoyed by Charles Duke of Calabria, for one year beyond his actual appointment, on condition that he would maintain the existing constitution and public liberty, uphold the seignory according to law, execute the ordinances of justice, and adjourn the next day's parliament to the square in front of the public palace for a final ratification of his authority. On these conditions the priors consented to attend in form and propose him to the people. On the following morning the Duke of Athens armed his retainers to the number of four hundred and twenty men and supported by most of the nobility, besides Giovanni della Tosa and his Consorteria †, with many of the Popolani, all secretly armed, proceeded to the place of adjournment. At his arrival the Gonfalonier, Priors, Buonomini, and Gonfaloniers of companies with all their subordinate officers and attendants issued in state from the palace and seated themselves along with the duke on the "*Ringhiera*" ‡ or marble landing

* Macchiavelli, Storia Fior., Lib. ii°. — Unless Macchiavelli found this speech amongst the public records to which he had access as secretary, I should imagine it to be his own composition from the substance of what really passed, because I find it nowhere else.

† The *Consorteria* was an union of several families under one common name for mutual protection.

‡ The *Ringhiera* or *Arringhiera*, (from *Aringare*, to harangue), was the broad flight and landing of white marble steps forming the ascent to the Prior's palace, now the *Palazzo Vecchio* of Florence, and from this place all public propositions were made to the parliament or general assembly of the people.

at its base. Silence having been commanded Francesco Rustichelli one of the priors, arose and attempted to harangue the people, but on coming to the words "*for one year*," his voice, by preconcerted plans, was lost in a tumult of shouts, of "*For life, for life*," which commencing with a few wool-carders and retainers of the nobility stationed on the skirts of the crowd, rolled onward with gathering force until the whole square rang with the cry of "*For life.*" "*Let the lordship be for life.*" "*Let the duke be our lord.*" These words were joyfully reëchoed by the nobles who rushing up the steps closed round their idol, tossed him lightly on their shoulders and attempted to enter the palace; but as the gate was closed, according to custom when the seignory were outside, axes were loudly called for: between force and treachery they succeeded in placing Walter on the judgment seat and then thrust the priors contemptuously into one of the meanest chambers of the building. The great gonfalon of Florence was torn from its staff while the banner of Athens overshadowed the battlements; the ordinances of justice were given to the winds, and the great republican bell rang out a loud *Te Deum* for the triumph of absolute government. Rinieri of San Gimignano, captain of the prior's guard who treacherously opened the palace, and Cerrettieri de' Visdomini the duke's esquire were dubbed knights on the spot, Guglielmo of Assisi the captain of the people acquiesced in everything and accepted the place of Bargello; but the Podestà Meliaduso d' Ascoli renounced his office, yet with doubtful signs of sincerity, since he consented to remain as one of the duke's retainers. Great rejoicings followed, and two days afterwards a decree of perpetual dictatorship passed through all the councils; the priors, now shorn of their power, were removed from the seat of government to the Petri palace in San Piero Schereggio with an honorary guard of twenty instead of a hundred men; most of the citizens were disarmed, and then, after a solemn thanksgiving and offering

at the shrine of Santa Croce, Walter de Brienne considered himself securely settled in the government *.

Such was the heedless impetuosity of a people whose grievances were real and complaints just; but whose means and object were mistaken: blinded by passion and deceived by the arts of their champion, confidence became unbounded, and confounding institutions with men, they dashed the image of liberty from its pedestal and set up a monster in its place. Such folly is scarcely excusable even in an oppressed and excited populace yet it was only repeating the lesson lately taught them for a worse object, by the very men whom they were now displacing: and the only difference between the Duke of Athens and Giacomo Gabrielli is that the former was elected with upright intentions by many, and with excusable feelings by most, as their perpetual ruler; the latter unlawfully, and with the worst intentions, for a year: in the choice of Walter the people exercised an acknowledged and legitimate authority; but the electors of Giacomo usurped their power and disobeyed a positive law: *that* was the sudden act of a too generally calumniated multitude, *this* the coolly calculated measure of constituted authorities intrusted with the maintenance of public liberty. On the other hand the conduct of the nobles was the result of a settled plan of vengeance to overturn, no matter how, a form of government which had almost driven them beyond the pale of society and made them desperate by a continually recurring persecution †.

The Duke of Athens lost no time in making all the dependent cities of Florence own his authority by separate elections as perpetual ruler, and Arezzo, Pistoia, Colle, Volterra, and San Gimignano soon acknowledged him while orders were simul-

* Istorie Pistolesi, Anno 1342. — Gio. Villani, Lib. xii., cap. iii. — Marchionne di Coppo Stefani, Istoria Fiorentina, Lib. viii., Rub. 555., vol. xiii. Delizie degli Eruditi Toscani.—Macchiavelli, Istorie, Lib. ii. — S. Ammirato, Lib. ix°. — Leon. Aretino, Lib. vi — Roncioni, Istorie Pisane, Lib. xiii., Ar. Stor. Ital.

† Giov. Villani, Lib. xii., cap. iii.

taneously dispatched for a levy of troops in France and Burgundy to sustain his power, so that he very soon had eight hundred foreign men-at-arms in his pay besides Italians. His relations too hurried over in shoals to share the favour of their kinsman; but when Philip of Valois, (who had been told that his journey to Naples was a pilgrimage), heard of Walter's exaltation, he dryly remarked "*Albergè il est le Pelerin, mais il y a mauvais ostel.*" And his words were quickly confirmed. A grave letter of reprehension and advice was also received from Robert of Naples in which the Duke is told that as neither wisdom nor virtue, nor long friendship, nor worthy services, nor vengeance for their wrongs had made him lord of the Florentines; but only their great discord and evil state, he had better govern by the people and their laws than by his own exclusive authority: he is told to restore the priors to their palace and power, to quit the former himself and reside in that of the Podestà where Charles of Calabria lived; and as the Florentines had *seven* in their administrative council he was advised to have *ten* "*a common number that unites in itself all the singular numbers and means that they should not be ruled by factions or division but in common*"*.

A state of warfare being unfavourable either to the accumulation of money or consolidation of power, which formed the paramount objects of Walter's ambition, no time was lost in strengthening his influence amongst the dependent cities of Florence, and concluding a peace with Pisa and all her allies, but totally unmindful of Florentine honour or interests†. By a treaty signed in October the possession of Lucca was confirmed for fifteen years to Pisa; the Guelphic exiles were re-established in their rights, and the Duke was to have the nomination of a Podestà for the same period, while Pisa retained possession of the

* Giov. Villani, Lib. xii., cap. iv.

† According to the anonymous author of the Istorie Pistolesi the Duke of Athens submitted the question of war or peace with Pisa formally to all the councils and acted with their consent.

citadel of Agosta and all the solid power, subject to the payment of 150,000 florins to the Duke by fifteen annual instalments*: the Florentine merchants were exempted from all impositions for five years only, although by ancient treaties they had a perpetual franchise: all exiles of the republic in the Pisan service were pardoned as well as their allies of the Ubaldini, Pazzi, Tarlati, and Ubertini families, so that the rebellious Bardi and Frescobaldi with all their followers returned in triumph to Florence †.

Thus externally secured, the Duke began his internal and unsteady government and being in consequence of king Robert's advice, unwilling to efface every form of republican institutions appointed nine priors from the lowest class of artisans, shorn of power, honour, and every ancient distinction except a new standard, where his own arms were emblazoned between those of the people and the city, with the popular escutcheon hanging as a medallion round the neck of the Athenian lion. The nobles who had expected to see the people irretrievably crushed, became alarmed at this open display of an union which they never anticipated; and the more so when it was followed by the condemnation of two members of the Bardi family; one in a penalty of 500 florins for having assaulted a citizen that had insulted him, the other less heavily for a more serious offence. But the popolani themselves had no reason to exult, for their gonfaloniers of companies were abolished; the laws and regulations of trades repealed, and every office that displeased the tyrant annulled without hesitation; the priors were mere shadows and the variable Walter de Brienne finally united himself with butchers, vintners, wool-carders, and the lowest artisans, whom in his bad Italian he called "*Le bone populе*" ‡.

* Sardi says only 50,000 florins, paid in seven years, were given; and Roncioni 100,000.

† Gio. Villani, Lib. xii., cap. viii.—Sardo, Cron. Pis., cap. lxxxi.—Roncioni, Lib. xiii., p. 791.—S. Ammirato, Lib. ix., p. 460.—Istorie Pistolesi, An. 1342.—Leon. Aretino, Lib. vi.

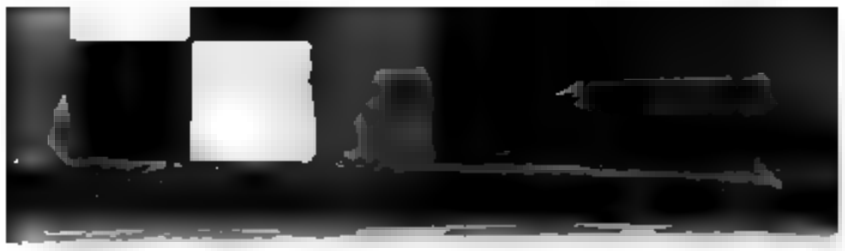
‡ M. di Coppo Stefani, Lib. viii., Rubric 566.

For more security he deprived the citizens of their heavy cross-bows, strengthened the palace windows with iron bars, erected a strong anteport before it, purchased the surrounding houses, and finally began to construct a massy and extensive fortress in which he did not scruple to use the materials already collected for rebuilding the Ponte Vecchio. To form more secure outposts he arbitrarily seized on several castellated houses and high towers that surrounded the palace square and garrisoned them with his retainers without remuneration to the owners: such doings opened the public eyes; his tyranny began to be painful to all; old taxes were augmented and new ones imposed; the regular assignments for discharging the national and foreign debt were withheld, the hostages unredeemed and the public creditor defrauded: as a judge his punishments were heavy and his judgments vicious; his officers were corrupt, his courts venal, and his former justice and courtesy changed to implacable cruelty and unbounded pride.

Such was the lord of Florence; and his servants imitated and even overstepped their master's iniquity. He suspected and disgusted the nobles while he courted the populace, who at this epoch began to be called "*Ciompi*" corrupted from "*Compère.*" A familiar appellation of the French soldiers which afterwards became famous in the seditions of Florence*.

Four hundred thousand florins were illegally extracted from the people in little more than ten months besides what was levied on the dependent cities, while six noble rectors with great power and salaries swept through the rural districts fleecing the rest of the nation. The wives and daughters of the citizens were seduced, insulted, and outraged with impunity; even charitable institutions were robbed and their funds lavished on licentious women; the sumptuary laws against female dress and ornaments, hitherto so dear to Florentine

* March. di Coppo Stefani, Lib. viii., Rubric 575, vol. xiii., of Delizie degli Erud. Toscani.



husbands and fathers, were all abrogated; public prostitution was concentrated, licensed, and taxed for the benefit of subordinate officers of government: and though the family feuds which were still numerous both in the city and Contado were for the most part tranquillised large payments were extracted from the parties; nevertheless this was a good deed and the only one of Walter's acts that survived his expulsion. Five hundred and fifty thousand florins of public revenue were altogether plundered; eighty thousand more were raised by a new estimation of property; and after a solemn promise of laying on no other tax, fresh exactions were daily made in the shape of tolls, loans, penalties, or any other form that was likely to answer the purpose; so that 200,000 florins were eventually invested in French and Neapolitan securities.

His government was nominally composed of the priors, who were nothing; of the bishop of Lecce his own vassal; of the Podestà Baglione of Perugia, a rapacious minion; of his Bargello and Conservator, and the infamous Guglielmo of Assisi, a ready executioner of the most iniquitous commands. Along with these was his friend Arrigo Fei, an instrument peculiarly acute in devising the readiest means of extracting money from a suffering and complaining people: besides three judges with summary jurisdiction, who held their court in the houses of the Villani and according to Giovanni with unbounded corruption. The bishop of Assisi, brother of the conservator, and the judge of Lecce assisted in his council; and the bishops of Arezzo, Pistoia and Volterra, with Tarlato of Pietramala and Ottaviano Belforte of Volterra, were retained as a sort of honorary advisers but real hostages, about his court to secure the obedience of their respective cities and possessions, as well as to maintain an outward appearance of piety and religious counsel. With the citizens he held little or no intercourse, and his only real counsellors were Baglione, Guglielmo, and Cerrettieri: his decrees were absolute, and always given under his own

private seal, which the chancellor took good care should not be unprofitable to himself.

Terror, cruelty, extortion and debauchery marked his reign and stamped the image of his character, for he was, says Villani, a man of little firmness and less faith; sensual, ungracious and avaricious; diminutive in stature, thin-bearded, malevolent, but very sagacious, and more of a Greek than a Frenchman*.

No act told more against him than the forcing of Naddo Rucellai, through his sureties, back to Florence, and then hanging him, contrary to all faith, for an alleged conspiracy in concert with Siena against his person: the charge was not entirely unfounded, but his sureties were compelled to pay 5000 florins on pretence of peculation subsequent to his original crime, and as Naddo was a man of great talent and influence with numerous friends, his death was peculiarly unpopular. Scarcely less so was a new offensive and defensive alliance with Pisa, and the joint maintenance of a body of troops; an act which shocked the prejudices not only of Florence but all Guelphic Tuscany. The appointment of six rectors from the class of nobles to govern rural districts, although meant to soften the asperity of that faction whose support he was unwilling to lose, entirely failed; but being desirous of showing his confidence in the people generally, he executed with horrible cruelty a certain Matteo di Marozzo for having revealed to him a conspiracy of the Medici and others against himself. Such an example might have been considered sufficient to have checked any further denouncements of plotters against so merciless a tyrant, yet Rinaldo Lamberto suffered death soon after for a similar revelation, so that whether he were warned truly or falsely, or if his conduct were in any way criticised, certain death was the result; a hard measure for Florence whose greatest liberty was in the free discussion of public men and measures†.

A.D. 1343.

* Gio. Villani, Lib. xii., cap. viii.
† Gio. Villani, Lib. xii., cap. viii.—Mar. di Coppo Stefani, Lib. viii., Rub. 568.—Macchiavelli, Lib. ii°.

Crowds of the tyrant's countrymen poured unceasingly into the city to whom he confided the most important charges; French customs, French rulers, and French attire, scandalised the still simple Florentines who found themselves insensibly changing their ancient Roman toga, which says Villani "was the handsomest, the noblest and the most decent of any other nation," for the short close vest and broad waist-belt of the French which could not be put on without assistance. His seductions, outrages, and the legalised establishment of public brothels disgusted the majority, especially the older citizens, who saw with indignation their children of both sexes rapidly sinking into vice and debauchery and exposed to the example and unnatural passions of dissolute and rapacious strangers *.

The dignity of their nation was trampled on; their customs outraged; their laws in fragments; their regulations despised; public decency openly insulted, and the modesty of both sexes was melting gradually away. Unused to princely pomp; unused to the armed myrmidons that commonly attend it; unused to show outward honour to those they hated; and above all, unused to restrain their thought, or speech, or action, they boiled with indignation when they beheld the mangled tongue of Bettoni Cini borne before him on a spear only for having found fault with the load of taxes by which his countrymen were oppressed. The man was insignificant, a slanderer, and generally hated; but his punishment was cruel, disproportionate, and unjust; he therefore met with universal commiseration.

"*An injustice done to one threatens many*" is an old Italian adage that could only have sprung from their free institutions; and with this and liberty in their heart, one sympathetic feeling shot like the electric fluid through every nerve, and roused the whole community. A very ancient Florentine proverb which says, "*Firenze non si muove se tutta non si dole*,"† was verified on the present occasion, for every house felt the tyrant's rod

* Gio. Villani, Lib. xii., cap. iv.— Istorie Pistolesi.

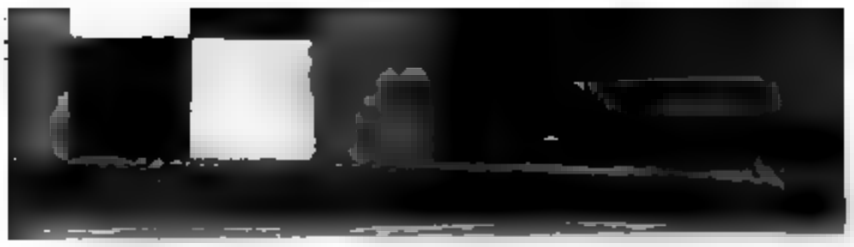
† Florence never moves unless all feel the pain.

and abhorred his jurisdiction: the nobles were deceived and mortified; the Popolani Grassi were driven from power and consequence, and ground to the very dust; they beheld their relations despoiled and massacred, and bore a deadly hatred to the tyrant: the middle classes saw trade languish, the city decline, public faith broken, and the whole community writhing under a searching taxation; a bad harvest and consequent scarcity put the populace entirely out of humour, while cruel executions and the general seduction of wives and daughters affected every class indiscriminately. Such was the condition of Florence when three principal conspiracies, by three different bands of citizens, in three distinct places, were simultaneously working; all struck by one bolt from the pregnant cloud of tyranny; nobles, popolani, and artisans, ignorant of each other's plans, but each determined to strike alone for liberty; as besides the general suffering, every order had its peculiar grievance: the ambition of the first was disappointed; that of the second humbled; and the third saw the fruit of its labour pass away like a shadow and vanish in the coffers of the tyrant*.

Angelo Acciaiuoli the Bishop of Florence who had mainly contributed to the duke's elevation, now seeing his error, became chief of the first conspiracy; he was supported by the numerous and powerful Bardi, the Rossi and Frescobaldi, besides many others of equal note, some of whom had prematurely invited Pisan assistance, and all had claimed that of Siena Perugia and the Counts Guidi.

The second plot was directed by Manno and Corso Donati, the Pazzi, Albizzi, and Cavicciuole, who unexasperated by personal injury fought for their country alone. At the head of a third were Antonio Adimari, the Medici, Bordoni, Rucellai, and Aldobrandini, all burning with hatred and revenge. These were the principal conspiracies amongst many, for the whole

* Gio. Villani, Lib. xii., cap. viii., xvi., xvii.—Marchionne di Coppo Stefani, Lib. viii., Rubric 576, tom. xiii. —Del. degli Eruditi Toscani.—S. Ammirato, Lib. ix., p. 465.



nation smarted and Florence at length according to the proverb began to move. Each plot had its separate plan of assassination; one to kill the tyrant while proceeding to the council, another to bring him down with a cross-bow in the streets, a third at the public games, a fourth when he visited his mistress at Casa Bordone in the Via Croce al Trebbio; and for the latter a house at each end of that street had been hired and filled with men, arms, and materials for barricades, so as to take him in a trap, while the other conspirators roused the people to revolt. All these failed from the hourly increasing suspicion of Walter who doubled his guards, armed his person, and concealed his movements*.

At this period one of the conspirators, Antonio Baldinaccio degli Adimari let a Senese friend, who was intimate with Francesco Brunelleschi, into the secret in order to procure external aid; the Senese asked Francesco's advice on the supposition of his being also implicated; but the latter through fear or some other unworthy motive still held to the duke and alarmed for himself, revealed the whole affair. Two rather obscure citizens were immediately arrested on the Senese gentleman's information who was unacquainted with any other principal conspirator: torture soon brought all to light: the extent of this conspiracy became alarming: Antonio Adimari was immediately summoned to appear before the council, and trusting to high rank and the fidelity of his companions boldly answered to the call; he was arrested, and instantly imprisoned. The capture of this chief filled the city with such terror that if the duke had only scoured the streets and hanged the conspirators, as Uguccione Buondelmonti and Francesco Brunelleschi advised him, ere the consternation subsided he would have stifled all further rebellion; but frightened at the numbers against him he first sent to ask aid of his allies, (for treaties had been signed in the spring with Mastino, Peppoli lord of

* Gio. Villani, Lib. xii., cap. xvi.

Bologna, and the Marquis of Este); and when assured of these succours having crossed the Apennines he summoned three hundred chiefs of the principal families, amongst whom were most of the conspirators, to assist, as had been frequently done, at a general council in the great hall of the palace, where death or perpetual imprisonment were secretly awaiting them.

The consciousness of his own machinations alarmed each conspirator; friend asked advice of friend; the fatal list went round, explanations followed, truth oozed out, and the persuasion of an universal conspiracy reassured the community: it was now deemed nobler to die bravely with sword in hand, than go tamely like sheep to be slaughtered in their own republican halls; wherefore instant revolt was resolved upon and every citizen prepared for the crisis.

On Saint Anne's day Saturday the twenty-sixth of July; the very moment for which they were summoned; all the heads of families, except the Buondelmonti, Cavalcanti and a few of the Popolani, armed themselves and followers and prepared the barricades, each band secretly assembling in the dwellings of its chief. An unusual stillness suddenly pervaded Florence, broken only by the tramp of patrols from about six hundred ducal men-at-arms distributed through the town. About mid-day two preconcerted frays were simultaneously heard in the Mercato Vecchio and Porta San Piero and a low deep murmur of "*To arms, To arms,*" arose from a crowd of the populace purposely stationed in these places. At this signal the iron-studded gates of every tower and palace were cautiously unbarred, and from each a mailed chieftain followed by a band of resolute citizens and sturdy peasants came abroad in arms. A thousand horsemen and ten thousand foot all clothed in steel, besides a half-armed populace scoured through the streets, and closing stealthily round the palace, made its grey walls ring to their sudden shout "*Death to the tyrant and his crew; long live the people, the commonwealth and liberty.*" Twelve streets leading

to the public square were promptly barricaded and the duke's guards attacked in divers places; for it was feared, if he made a sally, that many who had declared against him would nevertheless have joined his side; this was fortunately prevented, and scarcely three hundred fought their way to the palace before every passage was closed. House and tower now bristled with men and arms; arrows, javelins, stones, tiles, and missiles of every kind poured in showers upon the helmets of the Burgundian guard; the windows were filled with cross-bows, and the few mangonels they could procure played from the adjacent towers. Nothing could long withstand such a storm, and at sunset Walter's men-at-arms took shelter in the palace leaving their horses to the multitude.

The podestà's palace had in the meantime been forced by Manno Donati and Niccolo Alamanno, and the podestà himself sought refuge with the neighbouring Albizzi while the palace was plundered and every public document given to the flames. Corso Donati in emulation of his famous grandfather's deeds two-and-forty years before, led on his men to the Stinche and Volognana prisons where he liberated a host of friends and kinsmen to assist the glorious cause. Across the Arno the Bardi, Frescobaldi, and Rossi occupied both gates and bridges and cut off all communication between the two parts of Florence, being determined even if their friends failed not to yield that quarter; at evening however they threw open their defences, crossed the river and joined in the general assault. Next morning brought three hundred men-at-arms and four hundred cross-bows led by six spirited gentlemen of Siena to the rescue; two thousand hardy soldiers from San Miniato swelled the liberal ranks; from Prato five hundred more came hurrying in; old Simon of Battifolle who of yore had ruled the commonwealth for King Robert, did not now desert the citizens, but with his son Guido led four hundred vassals under the palace walls. Five hundred men were on their march from Pisa;

but the Florentines disdaining the help of such an enemy even to conquer their freedom, proudly refused all assistance from that quarter and reprehended those nobles who had requested it. Bands of vassals from divers barons were continually increasing; the Contado poured in its stream of fearless partisans, and all Florence teemed with a determined spirit of revenge. By night and day the conflict was continued; no respite was permitted; the bolt, the clang of arms, and the tramp of a thousand steeds, rang loudly and incessantly, and exulting cheers, and distant shouts, and cries and screams, from the child's treble to the rough bass of the veteran, startled the capital; but louder than all and high above the universal din rang the shrill cry, of "*Death to the tyrant,*" and struck terror to the innermost chambers of the palace. In vain was the popular standard displayed from the windows; the people were deaf to parley; no chivalrous shout from within answered taunting their cheers, for the spirit of liberty was no longer there, and a sullen, silent, and dogged resistance was alone opposed to popular enthusiasm.

Antonio Adimari yet a prisoner, who a few hours before saw only death and torture before him, was now led from his dungeon, created a knight by the tyrant, and sent forth to pacify his outraged countrymen. But the mind of Antonio was as true in prosperity as it was firm in danger: he first disdained, but by the advice of the alarmed and besieged priors, afterwards submitted to the disgrace of such knighthood, and then came forth to lead his own band of conspirators against the palace *.

Meanwhile a parliament was held by the bishop and principal citizens, and a *Balia* or provisional government of seven nobles and seven popolani appointed with full powers until October: Count Simone of Battifolle was named podestà, but he refused that office and all the sanguinary duties that were

* Antonio Adimari probably considered this a forced and invalid dignity, otherwise it was in that day considered dishonourable to fight against the person from whom the honour of knighthood had been received.

annexed to it and certain to be exercised; wherefore Giovanni Marquis of Valiano was elected, and six citizens, both nobles and popolani, were ordered to perform the duties until his arrival. A close search was made after all those who had been instrumental in executing the cruel measures of Walter de Brienne, and ere long a certain Simon of Norcia, a man high in office; Filippo Terzuole; and a notary of the Conservator; all cruel and rapacious minions; were discovered and instantly torn to pieces. Arrigo Fei was taken in the disguise of a monk and murdered, his body was dragged naked through the town and finally suspended by the feet before the palace windows; it was then embowelled and spread out like a slaughtered hog in the shambles. While these revolting scenes were passing in Florence, Arezzo profited by the crisis and storming the Florentine citadel, which was held for the duke, reestablished her own independence: Castiglione Aretino followed this example; Pistoia destroyed her citadel, took Serravalle, and declared herself free; Santa Maria-a-Monte and Montetopoli threw off all subjection; Volterra returned to its ancient lord Ottaviano Belforte; Colle and San Gimignano renounced their allegiance; many others recovered their independence, but nearly all effected this by bribing the Florentine governors: thus in a few short hours did this high-reaching duke and almost sovereign of Tuscany fall from the pinnacle of his glory to the condition of a beleaguered prisoner amongst the very people on whose necks he had so lately trampled *.

On the first of August 1343 six days after the revolution began, when the ducal garrison had nearly consumed its provisions, Count Simone di Battifolle again endeavoured to pacify the citizens and bring their tyrant to terms; but the people would listen to no parley until Cerrettieri de' Bisdomini, Guglielmo d' Assisi and his son a boy of only eighteen should be delivered into their hands. These were the most detested

* S. Ammirato, Lib. ix., p. 472.

of the ducal minions and the chief instruments of his cruelty; nor did the child's youth and extreme beauty excite compassion, for he was known to be as cruel and relentless as his sire! At first, unappalled by the terrible example already made, Walter bravely enough refused to give up these miscreants, and remained stedfast in this generous resolution until his mutinous garrison declared "that they would surrender even the duke himself sooner than die of starvation; and as they had the will so had they the power of doing so." A.D. 1343. Walter still resisted, but in vain; his resolution at length failed and the sacrifice took place.

It was settled that the beautiful but heartless boy should be first cast forth amongst the enemy, a victim to the Medici, the Rucellai, the Altoviti, the friends of Bettoni Cei and a crowd of others, all eager to shed his blood and crouching like tigers for their prey; each man firmly grasping a poniard in his right hand watched for the culprit while the left unconsciously pulled back his comrade lest he should outstrip him in the race of blood. The wicket was at length unbolted and slowly opened; the trembling boy was thrust out and in an instant a hundred daggers were buried in his breast; another minute saw the mangled remnants of that form so lately beautiful now reeking on a thousand lances: the miserable father; for he was still a father; just beheld this sight when his own body pierced by many a blade still smoking from the murder of his child was torn to atoms and in a moment crowned the spears of those whom his own cruelty had brutalised.

But neither the struggles of death nor the blood of the victims nor the sight of their mangled flesh could subdue such ferocity; they only added madness to fury and new appetite to revenge; for when the eyesight was sufficiently gratified some, as if to drive down vengeance directly on the heart actually devoured the reeking flesh of their victims while others more

fastidious kindled sundry fires, roasted their several portions, and even invited their neighbours to the feast*.

The people were so thoroughly absorbed in vengeance on these two that they forgot the third and worst of the miscreants, for he not only shared in all the duke's iniquity but acted against his own friends and countrymen; yet in the general fury he was forgotten, even remained uncalled for; lay in the palace until nightfall and then escaped through the efforts of his numerous kinsmen.

More terrified than humbled, the duke now wished to capitulate, and a treaty was with difficulty accomplished through the exertions of Count Simone assisted by the Senese ambassadors and the Bishop of Florence; his person being guaranteed until clear of the Florentine territory on condition of there signing a formal renunciation of every right that he could possibly claim over Florence.

The palace was surrendered to the negotiators on the third of August 1343 after eight days' resistance against the whole republic; but by their advice the Duke of Athens remained until the night of the sixth, when passing through the gate of Saint Nicholas and along the left bank of the Arno he crossed it higher up and soon arrived at Poppi in the province of Casentino: there with great difficulty, and not until after a threat of being taken back to Florence, was he compelled to sign his abdication. From Poppi he repaired to Venice and secretly embarking sailed for Lecce in Puglia leaving his troops to seek as they might for their arrears of wages.

Thus ended the lordship of Walter Duke of Athens by which he was enriched, Florence impoverished, and the citizens taught a hard but salutary lesson on the value of civil liberty

* This terrible tragedy has been repeated even in our own day at Naples under the auspices of Cardinal Ruffo by the so-called advocates of legitimacy, who pretended to war against the horrors of the great French Revolution.

and the danger of faction. After this revolution the city became quiet, the people soon disarmed, the shops were immediately thrown open, and every citizen resumed his ordinary labours: the Balìa reversed every act of Walter's government except that for the pacification of Florence and its Contado by the stoppage of private feuds; and thus the beauty of one good deed still shone through a dismal night of guilt and wickedness.

"This duke," says Macchiavelli, "was avaricious and cruel in his government, difficult of access, and haughty in his conversation. He wanted the service, not the affection of mankind and therefore preferred fear to love. Nor was his appearance less odious than his manners; for he was short and black, with a long spare beard so that in every way he deserved to be hated, and therefore in ten months his wicked conduct lost him that power with which the sinful councils of others had invested him"*.

But these few months of tyranny destroyed the fruits of many prosperous years: Florence the rich and powerful mistress of Tuscany, the rival of Venice and Genoa, lost all her treasure and nearly all her conquests. During the late war with Mastino and up nearly to the accession of Walter de Brienne, she ruled in Arezzo, Pistoia, Lucca, Prato, Volterra, Colle and San Gimignano; she possessed nineteen fortified towns in the state of Lucca and forty-six on her own territory without counting those belonging to nobles subject to her sway: now all was changed; the dependent cities not only revolted *with* her

* *Frammento di cronaca*," anonymous.—This Frammento is printed in the collection of Domenico Maria Manni (Firenze 1728) and I suspect it to be the "*Piccol Diario di Giovanni di Durante, del Popolo di San Piero Maggiore di Firenze*," mentioned by that author in his "*Metodo per istudiar, &c. La Storia di Firenze*"—Annali di Simone della Tosa.—Gio. Villani, Lib. xii., cap. xvi. and xvii.—Istorie Pistolesi, Anni 1342 and 1343.—Marchionne di Coppo Stefani, Istoria Fiorentina, Lib. viii., Rubrica 576 to 585.—Del. degli. Erud. Toscani.—Leon. Aretino, Lib. vi.—Scip. Ammirato, Lib. x., pp. 462 to 472.—Machiavelli, Stor. Fior. Lib. ii°, Sismondi, Rep. Ital. vol. iv., Cha. 35.—Cronica di Donato Velluti, p. 73, &c.

against the Duke of Athens, but *from* her also in their own behoof and eagerly seized this occasion to free themselves from Florentine dominion. She was not only unable but too wise to assert her claims in a moment of such exhaustion; being almost sure of their friendship, she would not risk their enmity; wherefore ambassadors were despatched to congratulate the citizens of Arezzo on their recovered liberty and renounce all jurisdiction over them: a similar course was taken with the rest, and most of them returned within a few months to their former state of dependance; even Arezzo after a few years followed their example.

Domestic affairs began by a reformation of the administrative government: the Balia* of the Bishop, and fourteen commissioners which had been formed during the revolution, now created a second Balia of a hundred and fifteen deputies, themselves included: namely seventeen popolani and eight nobles from each quarter with powers to form a permanent constitution. Previous to this, in consequence of complaints from the people of Oltrarno and those of San Piero Schereggio who formed two Sestos of Florence, and were only represented by one prior each although they paid more than half the civic taxes, it was settled that the town should resume its ancient division into quarters in order to equalize taxation, political power, and public representation.

After this time the quarters were designated from their principal churches with a banner for each: that of Oltrarno was complete in itself and called the quarter of "*Santo Spirito*" with an appropriate standard in which was embroidered the dove-like incarnation of the Holy Spirit on an azure field: the name of San Piero Scheraggio merged into that of "*Santa Croce*," and bore a turquoise banner charged with the cross of gold: "*Santa Maria Novella*" gave its name to the third quarter in whose blue ensign glittered a gilded sun: the Bap-

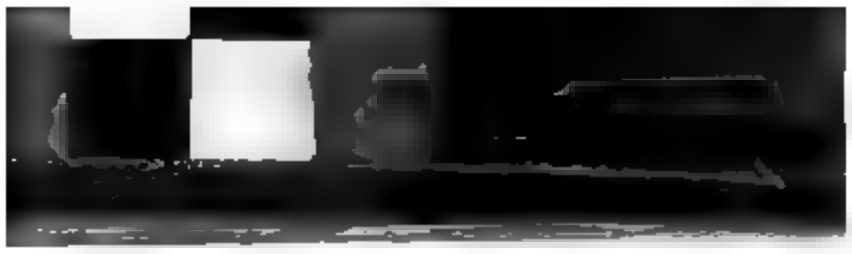
* "*Balia*" literally means power, authority; and was in fact a dictatorship.

tistery of "*San Giovanni*," a more reverenced edifice than the neighbouring cathedral, was embroidered in gold with the crossed keys, on a sky-coloured field, and became the standard and denomination of the fourth quarter. New civic divisions being thus established along with a new Balìa, the far more difficult and invidious duty of sharing political power, was next begun. The aristocracy fairly argued that as they were the principal and most active agents in recovering public liberty they had a right to participate in every public office; and in this they were supported by several of the Popolani Grassi who having tasted the sweets of power and being closely connected by intermarriages with the nobility, were willing to share the public government with them: but the middle class of citizens and the still poorer ranks above the mere populace, wished to exclude them from the seignory and two colleges, yet consented to their enjoyment of every other office.

This although barring them from government was a great relief from the state of almost absolute outlawry in which they had hitherto lived, and was probably considered so by a majority of nobles as the conditions were accepted by a plurality of voices but rejected as unjust by the Bishop and Senese ambassadors, who had great influence. It was therefore decided that as all had assisted in regaining their liberty all had a right to share its fruits: that two orders alone should be acknowledged, the nobles and the people; that one third of the priors should be chosen from the former and two-thirds from the latter; and that the crimes of the first were thenceforth to be subject to the same legal process as those of the last*.

Upon these principles backed by the Senese embassy and Count Simone di Battifolli, the board of priors was increased to

* According to the cotemporary annalist Simone della Tosa, there had been an agreement made between the nobles and people previous to the revolt, that the former should have their share in the government, which was not well kept by the people.—Vide Anno 1343, Annali di Sim. della Tosa.



twelve, namely one noble and two popolani from each quarter; and eight counsellors instead of the twelve goodmen, half from each order; (for the gonfaloniers of companies were not yet restored) while every other office was to be equally shared between the nobles and people. This arrangement was not received by the latter with much favour: great agitation pervaded the mass and nearly burst out into open revolt when a report became rife that Manno Donati and some other powerful aristocrats were chosen as priors: seeing however that these nobles were peaceable men the storm subsided and a momentary calm returned, without real satisfaction: the new seignory took immediate possession of the public palace and the bishop with his Balia of fourteen returned to their private dwellings, yet without resigning this delegated power which did not legally expire until the following month *.

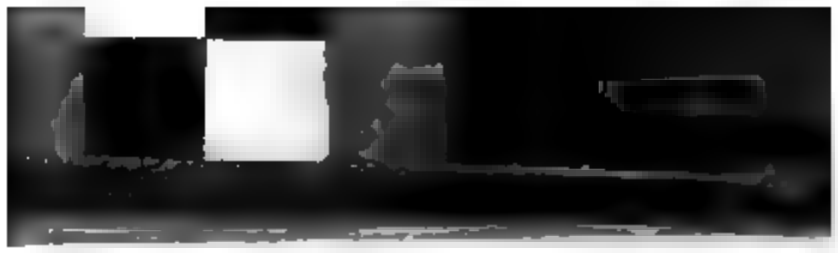
September 1343 was remarkable in Florentine history. The Duke of Athens had been already expelled, his tyranny annihilated, and in this month concord seemed apparently restored to a long divided people: the aristocracy, no longer oppressed, felt that its exertions deserved the recompense just received; for it had been most active in the destruction of a tyrant who oppressed the nobles less perhaps than others; but as it is easier to bear adversity than prosperity, no sooner were they established in their just civil equality than they attempted to soar far above it; their ancient vices burst out afresh, and although scarcely mustering a thousand families they wanted to trample on the Popolani who were many times that number and the most opulent members of the community. With one third of the voices amongst the priors and equality in all other magistracies they felt scarcely more contented than the generality of the people were at their having received so much. As an exclusive caste they had in fact more official power than at first

* Gio. Villani, Lib. xii., cap. xviii.— di Coppo Stefani, Lib. viii., Rubric 588. S. Ammirato, Lib. ix., p. 474.—M.

appears, for even in the Priors' council if every one of the popolani were opposed to them, a bare majority of two-thirds would have accrued: but this was very unlikely; for besides close and frequent relationship many of the Popolani Grassi were themselves nobles in everything but the name, and with as numerous a train of friends, clients, vassals and kinsmen; while in all other magistracies, as the nobles had equal power and greater union, by acting well together they could carry every question that required only two thirds of the votes unless the latter happened to be equally divided; and all this was so well understood that suitors were accustomed to take the precaution of propitiating official nobles with well-timed presents. On the other hand many of the Popolani Grassi who had formerly monopolised all power and profit were angry and discontented at its loss: then there were the minor tradespeople who deemed themselves equal to either of the others; they also murmured at their portion, and the Popolani favoured their claims because they could generally influence them by superior rank and riches; but if not, there would be fewer of them elected than of the nobles, who from their natural pride and the recollection of ancient injuries were always ready to take vengeance on the hated order of the Popolani. These discontents would perhaps have gradually subsided had there been any discretion in the aristocracy; but years of adversity had failed to quell the pride of this intractable order, and a strong feeling of terror and suspicion impressed the community at the idea of their restoration to office, for there seemed to be a peculiar and vital elasticity in their pride that would ever spring to its highest insolence when popular compression was removed *.

Instead therefore of burying their wrongs in oblivion they unwisely began to revenge them: the ordinances of justice were no more; and although the Balìa had established a public

* Gio. Villani, Lib. xii., cap. xix.—Mar. di Coppo Stefani, Lib. viii., Rubric 588.



register in their stead where the misdeeds of noblemen were regularly inserted for punishment; yet the latter remained still too strong for law and committed every crime from murder downwards, with impunity: they laid false accusations against citizens, and carried their arrogance to such a height that the Popolani knowing there were many names of the most reckless bold and powerful nobles in the election-lists, became alarmed for the consequences and determined on resistance. Many of the Popolani Grassi however acted from pure jealousy; they envied the power of these noble antagonists and had no other object than to seat themselves in their place: cabals sprung up everywhere; universal indignation seconded habitual popular jealousy and the general cry was that for one former tyrant a thousand fresh ones had started up; so that between insolence and lawless actions on one side, and rage on the other, in less than two months after the expulsion of Walter de Brienne the city had again fallen into a state of convulsion. Giovanni della Tosa, Antonio di Baldinaccio degli Adimari, and Messer Geri de' Pazzi, all displeased at this conduct of the aristocracy, although themselves nobles, joined hand and heart with the people. They consulted the popular leaders and the bishop Acciaiuoli, also a noble and well disposed but weak; and notwithstanding that some of these were Priors themselves it was resolved that tranquillity could not be expected while nobles were eligible to that dignity.

Acciaiuoli has been blamed, without reason, for yielding to this council, which nevertheless seemed best adapted for preserving peace, and with unappreciated frankness, he at once proposed to his Balia the exclusion of all nobles at the next election of Priors, leaving their right to every other office untouched.

Meetings were consequently held at Santa Felicità in Oltrarno, where the great aristocratic leaders, the Bardi, Rossi

and Frescobaldi were paramount; and there the well-meaning prelate endeavoured to gain his companions' approbation of the proposed arrangement as the safest and wisest both for themselves and their country: but the mere proposal enraged this assembly; his reasons were condemned and scouted, and the churchman himself denounced in unmeasured terms.

"*Let us see,*" cried the furious nobles, "*let us see who will dare to exclude us from the Seignory! Who will expel us from that Florence which we saved from the tyrant's hands?*" The foremost in this violence were the Bardi especially Ridolfo, he called the bishop a traitor who had first betrayed the republic and given it to the duke; and then betrayed and expelled him! "And now," added he, "thou wishest also to behave in the same treacherous manner to us." It would be monstrous, they argued, that the Fiesolines, the people of Feghine and Semifonte, the conquered foes of Florence, should alone enjoy the honours and dignities of the republic; those that were subdued command! While they; the conquerors; the true and ancient citizens, were denied; and in their own country condemned to obey the very people they had vanquished! What they had acquired with danger they now vowed to defend with valour, and display the same spirit in vindicating their own rights as they had lately done in achieving the liberties of their country. The meeting was then dissolved and an appeal to arms resolved by the nobles: but their opponents were not intimidated, and under the conduct of Antonio Adimari, Geri Pazzi, and Giovanni della Tosa, armed and marched to the palace with loud shouts of "*Long live the people and death to the traitor nobles.*" Tumults increased and the outcry redoubled; the popular Priors who were in the palace with their aristocratic colleagues were violently threatened if the latter were not instantly surrendered. "*Throw them from the windows, throw your noble colleagues from the windows, or we will burn you and them*

and the palace together." The popular Priors still pleaded earnestly and loudly for their colleagues, declared them to be good and loyal citizens, and that there was no disagreement amongst the Seignory; it was all in vain; the people knew that the assertion was a benevolent falsehood; fire and fuel were instantly called for and applied to the anteport; the nobles were forced to yield; they renounced office and with some danger reached their houses through an angry multitude. This happened on Monday the twenty-second of September scarcely two months after the Duke's expulsion! Such was the variable state of this restless city, a city that the famous Michael Scott before the battle of Monteaperto prophesied would not long flourish but fall into dirt and dissimulation *.

The nobility being thus expelled from supreme power no time was lost in filling up their places: by a new arrangement the eight counsellors were abolished and in their place the eight remaining priors assisted by the chiefs of the twenty-one trades, elected twelve new counsellors, three for each quarter and all popolani, reëstablished the gonfaloniers of companies to the number of four for each quarter instead of the old complement of nineteen; created Sandro da Quarata, (one of the sitting priors) Gonfalonier of Justice, and to avoid the too frequent assembly of parliaments a *Council of the People* consisting of seventy-five from each quarter was established. Thus, says Villani through storms and dissimulation the public government once more made its way into the hands of the people: democracy was indeed again paramount; if that can be called democracy which wanted only titles and a few more years of recorded antiquity to identify it in the fullest significa-

* Gio. Villani, Lib. xii., cap. xix.—Macchiavelli, Libro ii°.—S. Ammirato, Lib. ix., p. 474.—M. di Coppo Stefani, Lib. viii., Rub. 588. Michael Scott's words according to Villani, are "*Non diu stabit stolida Florentia florum; decidet in fetidum, dissimulata vivet.*" And Dante who seldom omitted a sarcasm on the unquiet nature of his countrymen reproves their inconstancy in the sixth Canto of his "Purgatory."

tion with a long-established aristocracy. The richest citizens had been gradually forming an oligarchy in the state, which creeping upward on the stem of liberty had acquired a power that excited the people's jealousy scarcely less than the nobility itself: like them they had their massive palaces, their "Loggia" and aspiring towers; their broad lands, their followers, and their baronial rights: with numerous families and still more numerous clients, their houses were the resort of youthful citizens as haughty and ambitious as the proudest aristocracy. Still the connecting link of citizenship was not entirely snapped; they were *Popolani*, not *Nobili*, and never could be so, for riches and industry might always make an inferior citizen their equal; and the same general tie, but particular distinction, that existed between these and the middle class of Florence, obtained also between the latter and the simple artisan: the sun of ambition shone brilliantly for all, but jealousy was the cloud that intercepted it.

While these events were passing, a severe dearth of food increased public discontent, poverty as usual feeling it the most: corn was kept back for speculation, or sold with enormous profit by every grain-holder, except one citizen of rank, a certain Andrea Strozzi, who perhaps at first from compassion, distributed it daily at a moderate price and became so popular that from folly or madness he at last issued out on horseback in complete armour followed by a mob of several thousand people and surrounded the public palaces with cries of "*Long live the poor and destruction to the rich and the 'Gabelle.'*" The tumult was soon quelled by a few arrows from the palace windows and the man was hurried off by his friends; but it showed the public temper and revived as the nobles thought their hopes of success against opulent burgesses. The lower orders were accordingly courted, the cry was repeated at their barricades whenever a concourse of poor citizens happened to assemble within hearing (for hostile pre-

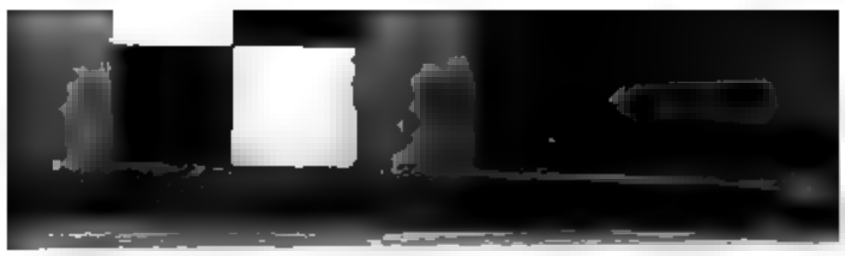
parations had been openly making) and every means were taken to detach them from the Popolani Grassi. Outward aid was sought even from Pisa and Lombardy, internal resources were augmented; the bridge heads again barricaded and occupied; "*Serraglj*"* everywhere conspicuous, and everything denoted civil war. The citizens were no less active; succours from both Siena and Perugia were already on their march to Florence; those from the former were delayed by a stratagem of the nobles but finally joined with an augmented force of heavy-armed soldiers.

The principal heads of opposition on the right bank of the river were made, first by the Adimari-Cavicciuli, one of the most warlike daring and powerful families of their order: they inhabited the present Corso degli Adimari, then filled with their houses palaces and towers from the Corso to their loggia in the Piazza di San Giovanni; next by the scarcely less potent clan of the Cavalcanti in Mercato Nuovo; and by the Pazzi and Donati at San Piero; all these streets and buildings having been strongly armed and fortified.

The leading families of Oltrarno, namely the Nerli at the Ponte alla Carraia, the Mannelli in the Via Maggio (the Ponte à Santa Trinità was not as yet rebuilt) and the Rossi and Bardi at Ponte Vecchio and Rubaconte bridges, had all strongly fortified themselves along the whole line of the Arno, Saint George's gate on a height above being also in possession of the Bardi. On a rumour that the twenty-fifth of September was to be the day of outbreak, the people of San Giovanni with the Medici, Rondinelli, and Ugo della Stufa at their head, reënforced by the inhabitants of Borgo San Lorenzo, the butchers, and other trades-people, to the number of a thousand, determined not to wait for the attack, but on the twenty-fourth under three banners of their quarter without orders from the

* "*Serraglj*" were merely strong barricades or rather stoccades inclosing a certain space of city.

Seignory assaulted the Adimari-Cavicciuli, and with increasing strength after a fight of three hours obliged them to capitulate. Their persons and property were spared and the victorious citizens with new force and spirit attacked successively the Donati, Pazzi, and Cavalcanti, who intimidated by the fall of the Adimari made but little resistance and surrendered on the same conditions. The last and most formidable quarter still remained to be subdued; it was strong in men and arms and firm of purpose; the fortified houses of the Rossi, Bardi, Mannelli, and Nerli, extended in an almost unbroken chaina long, and many of them hanging over the Arno, from the bridge of Rubaconte to that of Carraia; Ponte Vecchio forming the centre. Strong barricades were thrown across all these bridge heads; the Via Maggio and the Piazza de' Frescobaldi were occupied by that family and the no less powerful Rossi, who overawed the people and checked any attack from the southward while they maintained a line of connection between the Nerli in the west, and the Mannelli and Bardi at the eastern extremity of the position; the gate of Saint George being still held by the latter. Arrayed under their various standards the citizens assembled in front of the public palace where the golden cross of Santa Croce waved over four brave bands of mailed spearmen, and the sun of Santa Maria Novella glanced on an equal number of cross-bows and heavy-armed infantry: further off the splendid temple of San Giovanni glowed in its azure field as the several companies defiled from the Mercato Vecchio to the appointed place of combat. The cross-bowmen spreading along the quays and towers and houses, maintained a constant play of arrows on the opposite works, while the heavy-armed foot compressed into one dense column moved forward, and with a sudden rush thought to carry the Ponte Vecchio which was then open and of wood; but they were met by such a shower of missiles from the towers of the Bardi, Rossi, and Mannelli, all clustered about that point, and so rough a recep-



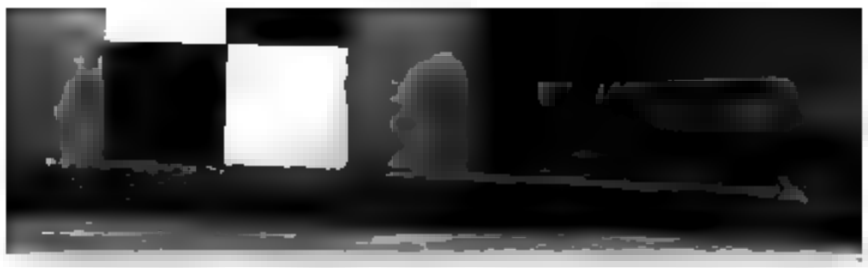
tion from the ranks below, that after a long struggle they were repulsed with fearful slaughter and lost more men here than in all the three former engagements.

After a while they rallied, but ill-pleased with their treatment left the two companies of the Viper and Unicorn, belonging to the Santa Maria Novella quarter, to blockade this bridge, and marched to Rubaconte: here the Bardi were alone, but received them with such a storm from above and below that after leaving many of their gallant comrades on the ground they were again compelled to retire, and ordering two divisions of the Santa Croce men to watch this bridge also, retraced their steps and moved on the Ponte alla Carraia. During these attacks the wool-carders and artisans of San Friano and the Fondaccio di Santo Spirito, led on by the Capponi with other families of Popolani Grassi, made a spirited attack on the Nerli, and though the latter fought stoutly they were driven from their defences and completely beaten: the Serraglio at the bridge head, having no towers to protect it, was carried by assault from within and the passage opened for those companies whose banners were now seen advancing along the opposite quay. Thus reënforced they lost no time in assailing the Frescobaldi who deeming themselves safe on that side were hotly engaged with the people of Via Maggio; but taken so unexpectedly in flank by the whole civic force they lost all heart and quitting the battle fled to their several houses with their hands crossed upon their breasts imploring mercy of their victors. It was granted; and the citizens hurried on to the Rossi and Mannelli who successively fell by the same flank movement so that the fierce-spirited Bardi were left alone to gain the day or die. The former they saw was now impossible against all the strength of Florence, and magnanimously resolved upon the latter: the people's repeated attacks on both bridges and opposite the Borgo San Jacopo were repulsed with great bravery; rarely, says Ammirato, was an enemy's city

attacked with more valour or defended with more courage than the Via de' Bardi on that memorable day. On one side, the people were indignant that a single family should thus resist the whole united city; on the other, that single family remained as true to their cause as they were implacable in their hate, and expected no mercy if they surrendered: certain to die by the executioner they deemed it more glorious to breathe their last through the bars of their helmet like true knights, than tamely offer their throat to the knot or axe of the headsman. With such feelings the battle became desperate, and the assailants finding it impossible to force this position at their present points of attack bethought themselves of another expedient: in the preceding spring a new street had been opened from the neighbourhood of Santa Felicità towards the Arcetri gate, on purpose to establish a communication without the walls in case of tumults between the lords and people; and also for enabling the latter to defend that gate without passing within the lines of the Rossi and Bardi *.

Three companies were immediately despatched through this street to fall upon the rear of the Bardi's position: this drew many from the defence of the bridge-heads and Serragli; for the attack was sudden, unexpected, and in their weakest point; alarm spread rapidly and resistance slackened: seeing this, a German knight of the name of Strozza, who had done great deeds that day in the people's cause, forced his way through the Serraglio at Ponte Vecchio and in the face of a shower of missiles led his men to the other side. Being supported by the blockading troops, who attacked and carried the bridge-head at the same moment, he struck terror through the antagonist ranks, and rapidly following up his blow compelled the disheartened Bardi to seek shelter in Borgo San Niccolò. Here they were protected by the Mozzi and other adverse families, who had with the company of La Scala previously occupied that

* Gio Villani, Lib. xii°, cap. xiii°.



quarter as well as the Ponte Rubaconte, besides some other houses of the Bardi at San Georgio, in order to defend their own property which lay in the neighbourhood and was exposed to the indiscriminate fury of a victorious multitude. The lives of the Bardi were thus saved but their dwellings were plundered even to the very tiles and timber of the roofs; and then no less than twenty-two houses and palaces were burned to ashes with a loss of 60,000 florins to that numerous and powerful race *.

Thus terminated the great and final struggle between a mixed democracy and pure aristocracy in Florence, between an indignant people and their imperious nobles: the ancient aristocratic spirit was thenceforth broken: convinced when too late of the folly of attempting to oppose a united people they sullenly bent their necks to the yoke of popular government and became, says Macchiavelli, more affable and complying: but this he says "was the reason why Florence lost all her military character and all her generosity;" an assertion perhaps of some truth, but which would require a more intimate knowledge of those times and circumstances than we now possess to substantiate †.

In the calm that followed this furious tempest, the democratic orders floated like a victorious navy, intent only on securing their prizes and repairing the injuries they had sustained. Independent of the mere populace who were attached to no corporate trade, three classes of democracy now became politically distinguished; namely the upper, middle, and lower, for the nobles were little better than outlaws. The Popolani Grassi from their acknowledged riches and authority were habitually considered as superior, but the "*Mediani*" or middle classes, and the "*Artefici Minuti*" or small trades-

* Muratori, Annali, Anno 1343.—Gio. Villani, Lib. xii., cap. xxi.—Istorie Pistolesi.—Mar. di Coppo Stefani, Lib. viii., Rubrica 592.—Scip. Ammirato, Lib. ix.—Frammento di Cronaca, (Collection of D. Manni.)—Cronaca di Donato Velluti, p. 75.

† Macchiavelli Istor., Lib. iii°.

men acquired an important accession of political power. In breaking up the old democratic oligarchy the constitution was remodelled and for a while a spirit of genuine republicanism and comparative tranquillity pervaded the commonwealth: this salutary change was accomplished by Count Simone di Battifolli in conjunction with the Senese and Perugian ambassadors together with a new Balìa of two hundred and six or seven citizens chosen from every acknowledged class of the community. In it were included the nine priors, the twelve goodmen or councillors; the sixteen gonfaloniers of companies; the five officers of commerce; the fifty-two "*Capitudini*" or consuls of the various trades, and twenty-eight "*Arroti*" or adjuncts from each quarter which last being all artificers gave a considerable majority to that class. Every popular citizen considered worthy of holding office was comprised in the scrutiny-list, and a hundred and ten votes were to carry the election of any candidate; but as a hundred and twelve members were artificers it is not surprising that the names of three thousand three hundred and forty-six candidates were set down as competent to conduct the affairs of government; of the whole number however scarcely a tenth survived the scrutiny of the gonfaloniers of companies to whom a power of selection was finally intrusted. By this assembly, which seems to have really represented the citizens of Florence it was decreed on the twentieth of October, to elect a gonfalonier of justice; two priors from each quarter; twelve goodmen and sixteen gonfaloniers of companies in the following proportion; for the priorship, two Popolani Grassi, three Mediani, and three Artefeci Minuti; the gonfalonier from each class and each quarter successively; beginning with Santo Spirito; and the others as it would seem from whatever class they happened to be drawn. But this preponderance of the lowest order of competent citizens in the Balia after a while produced inconvenient consequences and means were found to modify it on the plea that

the third order enjoyed more than its fair proportion of political power; and so the salutary regulations of Count Simon and his foreign coadjutors were ultimately violated.

The constitution being thus reestablished on a broader and more equitable basis the revival of the ordinances of justice was next discussed, and here again the benevolence of Count Simon and his companions was effectually exerted: as a reward for their own disinterested services they made two requests; first for a modification of the severe laws against the nobles and secondly for the admission of a certain portion of them to the honours of democracy: this was a sharp trial of gratitude in the existing temper of the people; nevertheless both petitions were partially granted. By the ordinances of justice it was usual to levy fines of 3000 lire on the whole family of a noble culprit, however innocent or distantly related, besides the punishment due to the individual offender: this liability was now confined to the third degree of parentage in a direct line *unless the culprit were killed by his own kinsmen*, or delivered up to justice; in which case the penalty no longer could be enforced, or the money was to be repaid if already exacted. Several noble families had joined the people in their late struggle; others were acknowledged to be quiet inoffensive citizens; many, especially in the country, were reduced in power and riches, and some of them so much impoverished as to be dependent on their own manual labour for existence. To gratify Count Simon and his colleagues as well as to dilute and weaken the aristocracy by a reduction of its numbers, about five hundred nobles were admitted into the democratic order, so far at least as to be eligible to every office except those of prior, goodmen, gonfaloniers of companies, and captain of the rural "*Leagues*" or military unions of parishes; all of which were closed to them for five years. But on the other hand, if any one of these freedmen during the ten following years should by a council of the people be pronounced guilty of wilful murder; of the amputation of a limb;

of severely wounding, or of directly or indirectly injuring the property of a Popolano, he was instantly to be doomed to the punishment of perpetual nobility. Yet there were noble families some of whose members had sacrificed their lives in the popular cause that, says Villani, through mere envy were refused even this modified recompense: and such, he adds, is commonly the meed of services rendered to the people, especially to the Florentine people, amongst whom, if the balance had been rightly adjusted were several families and races of the Popolani that for their wicked deeds and tyrannical conduct deserved to be placed amongst the nobles more than the greater part of those who were compelled to remain in that class; and all this in consequence of bad government*.

The first election of public officers that took place after these regulations were completed was so favourable to the inferior ranks that every suspicion of treachery vanished, confidence was restored and the city once more resumed its usual tranquillity after having experienced four revolutions within a little more than thirteen months, every one of them accompanied by civil war, or tumultuous assemblies of armed and angry citizens. First the oligarchy of the Popolani Grassi was overthrown and changed into absolute tyranny by the Duke of Athens, who in his turn fell under the combined force of nobles and people; then the expulsion of the former from the Seignory and their utter destruction as a political body, and finally the mixed rule of all the popular orders. "Which may it please the Lord," continues Villani, "to render an instrument of salvation and exaltation to our republic: but I doubt it, in consequence of our sins and faults, and because the citizens are void of all love and charity amongst themselves, but full of deceit and treachery the one against another. And this cursed art has remained in Florence amongst those who are our rulers; namely, to promise fairly, and do the contrary; if they be not

* Gio. Villani, Lib. xii., cap. xxiii.

persuaded by especial prayers or great inducements. Wherefore not without reason doth God permit his judgments to fall on nations, and this is enough for those who have understanding."

A.D. 1343.

After these transactions Count Simon was further rewarded by the restoration of certain family possessions unjustly held from him by Florence, and in November peace was confirmed with Pisa nearly on those conditions signed by the Duke of Athens, except that the Florentines were restored without limit to all their ancient immunities and privileges in that city. It was a treaty of necessity, not inclination, therefore unsatisfactory, unpopular, and unstable *.

Although the distribution of political power in Florence became at times sufficiently disturbed between this period of her history and the loss of liberty in 1532, yet as the great constitutional frame and machinery of government remained unaltered to the last, this chapter may perhaps be usefully finished by a general view of the principal magistracies as they were somewhat enthusiastically described by the historian Goro Dati about seven-and-thirty years after the present epoch. "What the Sacred Scripture tells us," he begins, "should be received as certain 'Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.' And therefore all that we may say of this just and magnificent government, (keep the saying in thy mind,) it is God that by his grace, and by the prayers of the glorious Virgin Mary, (of whom more mention is made in Florence than any other city in the world,) and by the prayers of *Messer* Saint John the Baptist, champion and advocate of this city, it is God that rules and supports the state and its government: who by his grace gives virtue to men in order that they may receive the reward of it. And for that thou mayest clearly understand it, I say that this city is endowed with the active virtue, that employs itself about

* Gio. Villani, Lib. xii., cap. xxii., xxiii., xxiv., xxv.—S. Ammirato, Lib. ix.

many things of which there has been frequent and particular mention made in this treatise. This virtue prepares, as Martha did, with anxious care all those things that prudence dictates; but the said city is not less singularly endowed with the contemplative virtue which brings us nearer to God like Mary Magdalen, and thus being united with God and God with her, he holds and preserves the said city. Let us speak first of the active life.

"There are four Gonfalons for every quarter, each with its particular device, and under each its own company whose captain is called the Gonfalonier. Next there are the trades, twenty-one in number, seven of them called the major trades, and fourteen the minor trades.

"First is that of doctors of laws and notaries which has a proconsul superior to its consuls and is ruled with great authority and may be called the trunk of all the doctrine and skill in the profession of the notary's art throughout Christendom: and here there have been great masters and authors and workers in it.

"The source of the doctors of law is Bologna, and the fountain of the notary's art is Florence.

"Next comes the trade of those merchants that traffic out of Italy, who are more numerous in Florence than in any other city.

"Then follows the banking or money changers' trade which throughout the world may be said to be almost entirely in Florentine hands for they have establishments in all the mercantile towns.

"The fourth art is the wool-trade. More and finer woollen cloths are made in Florence than any other place; and its masters are good, great, and honoured citizens, and understand their work.

"The fifth is the silk-trade which includes both the raw and manufactured article, as well as cloth of gold and silk and the

goldsmith's art, in which trades they work nobly especially in silk stuffs.

"The sixth is the art of the apothecaries, doctors, and retail vendors of clothing and other small ware: and this is a great trade in the number of persons.

"The seventh is the furriers, pellisse-makers, and tanners of fine skins and here finishes the list of the seven major arts.

"Then come the fourteen minor arts or trades, each distinct and regulated according to its business.

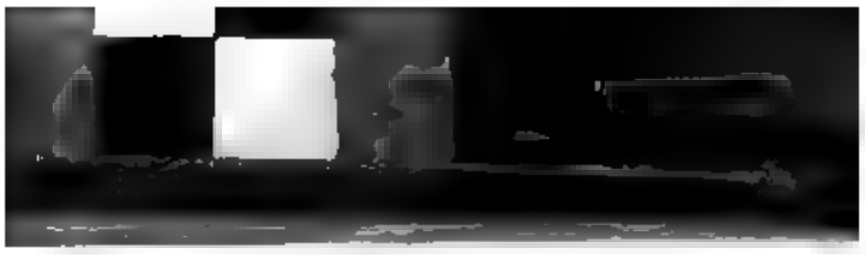
"First the linendrapers, and secondhand dealers in clothes and furniture; then the shoemakers, the smiths; the dealers in salt and seasoned meats, &c., the butchers (which seems to have included graziers and breeders): the vintners; the innkeepers; the waist-belt makers, the leather-dressers, the cuirass-makers; the locksmiths; the master-masons; the master-carpenters, and the bakers.

"The seignors are the eight priors of the arts, two for each quarter, and the gonfalonier of justice who is chosen in turn from every quarter at each new election. All these are men chosen from the best of the inhabitants for their excellence of character and conduct; and the gonfalonier is as it were the chief of all the priors and must be forty-five years of age. The morning he takes office he is presented with the gonfalon of justice, a red cross in a white field, on a great silk standard which he keeps in his chamber, and whenever he goes out with it on horseback the whole people must follow in his train and obey him.

"Six of the priors are chosen from the higher trades and two from the lower; and two people of the same '*Consorteria*,' or two relations by the male line are not eligible to this office at the same time nor for one year afterwards; and none can be elected a second time under three years. The first election commences on the calends of January and the office lasts two months; and so on throughout the year, changing the govern-

ment six times. On the morning they enter into office all the shops are shut and a general holiday is kept: the whole population assembles before the palace to escort those who have just left office to their homes, accompanied by their relations, friends, and nearest neighbours after having spent the two previous days in instructing the new seignors in all public business then under consideration. During these two months they never quit the palace but sit in council every day, and elect a president, each in his turn for three days by lots; and the others for these three days must follow him while he walks by the side of the gonfalonier: and he presides, proposes, and puts all matters to the vote; and without him no business can be done. Their deliberations are always secret and their votes given by ballot: they have a monk for their secretary who receives the black and white beans in a box: each secretly giving him one which he with the same secrecy places in the ballot-box; the *black* being '*yes*' and the *white*, '*no;*' and two-thirds of black beans are necessary to carry a question. Each has his private chamber in the palace, the gonfalonier being first considered in the arrangement of apartments, and each has his servant to attend on him in his own room and at the public dinner table. These nine servants are extremely respectable persons and their situation is considered honourable; each has two under servants to send about on business they themselves being always obliged to remain in the palace. There are one hundred attendants for the whole establishment all dressed in green livery with certain public badges; these are forced to attend on the priors when they go into public and are also employed to carry the commands of government to the citizens: they are commanded by a foreigner who is much honoured and respected called the '*Captain of the Footmen.*'

"Of such consideration are these attendants that if any one of them were a debtor or had a price set on his head for a



crime, no citizen or public functionary could molest him on pain of death without the permission of the said seignors.

"No one is allowed a seat at the dinner table of the priors except their notary, foreign potentates or their ambassadors, or those of any other republic when it is intended to honour them: or sometimes, on particular days the Podestà and Captain of the People with a few of those citizens who are in office.

"The table of these seignors is said to be as well prepared, as richly ornamented and as cleanly served as that of any other seignory: three hundred golden florins a month are allowed for this alone; besides which they have fifers and musicians and jesters and jugglers (all then held in high esteem) and every sort of amusement; but they have little time for such things, being soon called away by the president to public business which always abounds and never fails them.

"Their notary remains two months, as they do, in the palace, and has no other duty than that of writing their deliberations: but there is also a permanent notary who assists when necessary, is keeper of the law books and orders of government, and has to make a journal of all the proceedings of the priors and their colleagues (the twelve Buonomini and sixteen gonfaloniers) with the councils.

"They have also a chancellor or secretary whose office is permanent. He has to correspond with all the foreign governments and private persons on the part of the commonwealth: they are always poets and men of great learning *.

"There are many under secretaries to do the less important business of the seignory, whose office power and authority (the seignory's) are beyond measure great: their will is law while they remain in office but they rarely put forth all their

* Amongst those who filled this post we find the names of Collucio Salutati, Leonardo Aretino, Poggio Bracciolini, Carlo Marsuppini, Marcello Virgilio; and though last not least, Nicolo Machiavelli.

strength; only in extreme cases and on certain great and necessary occasions.

"They are not liable to be called to account for their conduct while in office except for venality and peculation and then they are judged by the 'Executor of the Ordinances;' (of justice) or in case of his absence, by the Podestà.

"The next office is that of the sixteen gonfaloniers of companies which begins on the eighth of January and lasts four months: they must be ready whenever called upon, which is almost every day, to place themselves at the feet of the seignors, as the cardinals at the pope's feet, and give their advice. The morning of their inauguration is kept as a festival with closed shops; the seignory come out on the Ringhiera with the podestà and captain of the people one of whom ascends the rostrum and makes an eloquent oration in honour of the seignory and gonfaloniers; then each receives his gonfalon and with trumpets and fifes playing before him proceeds home accompanied by his followers; and each gonfalon has under it three pennons with the same device and presented at the same time as the banner itself.

"There is another office called the Buonomini or good men: it commences on the fifteenth of March and lasts three months while the days increase in length; and at Midsummer when they begin to shorten fresh ones enter on their office and remain until the day equals the night; then the next until the shortest day; after which another set comes in until days and nights are again equal. And this is done with a certain mystery; and they have to attend any day when called upon at the feet of the seignory to give advice; and by the laws of the community there are many questions of great moment which cannot be determined by the priors alone: these two offices are called *Colleagues* * and are in high reputation.

* In the old writers we almost constantly meet with the word *Collegi* for *Colleghi*, which may sometimes lead to a mistake in the denomination

"Next comes '*The Council of the People*' formed of ten persons from each of the sixteen companies, all the consuls of the arts, together with the colleagues, seignory, and certain other offices, in all about two hundred and fifty. In this council are confirmed every law, statute, and order of the republic already passed by the seignors and their colleagues; and if there be not two-thirds of black beans, the question is lost; and what passes this council has still to go to another called the '*City*' or '*Common Council*,' where counting the seignory and colleagues there are two hundred members; and if the question does not gain two-thirds of the votes in this council also, it is lost; but just, useful, and honest things pass and become law.

"The '*Dieci de Balia*,' (or Ten of Power,) is composed of persons either elected by open vote or the ballot, and are experienced respectable and chosen men: but this office is only created in time of war and then they have both within and without the city, in all military affairs, the whole national authority.

"The office of the '*Eight of the Guard*,' has to watch against any attempts to injure the government, the city, or the possessions of the republic: it has no power to punish but is bound to place the offender in the hands of the Podestà who executes justice.

"The office of '*Regulators of Public Accounts*' is composed of six persons whose duty it is to receive and superintend the revenues of the community, see that the public be not cheated, examine the treasurers' books, and take care that all arrears are paid up by national debtors. There are also the governors of the gate-tolls now called Masters of the Custom-house, of salt, wine, and contracts, who have much business to mind, and particularly to see that the public be not cheated.

of these two magistracies, which were generally called Colleagues, not Colleges, as might easily be supposed; yet the whole body, Buonomini and Gonfaloniers, are also called the Colleges by some writers.

"The office of '*Captain of the Party Guelph*' is grand and honourable, more from remembrance of the past than any thing they have to do in the present day: they have to receive many revenues and spend them in honour of the Guelphic party.

"The office of the '*Ten of Liberty*' is of infinite importance and given to men of great science and experience: all civil causes are brought before this court as well as complaints of injustice, frauds, deceits, false documents; in short any dispute of a civil nature between man and man is here examined, and decided if possible, without reference to a court of justice. It is a court of equity, and discretion, and very useful to the poor who have not wherewithal to spend in actions, lawyers, and attorneys.

"The '*Officers of Abundance*' are only created in time of dearth to secure a sufficient supply of grain for the public.

"The office of the '*Grascia*' or superintendants of provisions has to oversee the mills and millers and protect the public from fraud in weight or measure: they also hold a sort of court for all those cases which do not come under the jurisdiction of any of the trades.

"There is also an office for the widows and minors elected by open vote; good and honest men who fear God and love mercy. They are responsible for all minors placed under their charge until the minority terminates.

"The '*Officers of the Castles*' and fortified places have to see that all the fortresses of the republic are in good repair and effectually provisioned and garrisoned.

"The '*Officers of the Towers*' have to attend to the city walls and country bridges, the street pavement, and the general state of the roofs and projections that may have been neglected.

"The '*Officers of the Condotta*' have the superintendence of recruiting, paying and reviewing the troops. Besides these there are many other offices, each with its establishment of clerks and treasurers.

"There are also the Consuls of the Arts, each art with its particular hall which is held in great honour and highly ornamented: courts of justice are held in them twice a week by the consul or consuls of the trade to which it belongs; for some trades have eight consuls, some six and others four according to their numbers and business, and from the sentence of these consuls there is no appeal. A consul of any art may judge matters brought before him by one belonging to another trade if the complaint lie against a member of that over which he presides, and also decide any cause for or against a person who is not enrolled in a trade, under similar circumstances.

"In the '*Commercial Court*' is a foreign doctor of civil law, with six citizens as a council, chosen from the ablest and most respectable of the said trades, one from each of the five major arts; for those of the law and the fur-trade are excepted; and one chosen by lot amongst the fourteen minor arts in conjunction with the fur-trade: and it is thus ordered because the above five arts are composed of merchants, and only a few of their most experienced men are elected. Before this court are brought all the great questions and cases of mercantile and maritime affairs throughout the world; and things that happen by sea and by land, bankruptcies, affairs of mercantile companies, seizures, and an infinity of questions; and just judgments and able decisions are pronounced; and there is no appeal. This office has a house and a palace, both of great size; and honoured, and ornamented, and magnificent. The period of office for the councillors is only three months, but that of the judge six; and he must remain in the palace with his notary and attendants and is not allowed to have his wife and children there.

"The three principal '*Rectors*' now remain to be noticed; namely, the *Podesta, Captain, and Executor*. It is necessary that they should be foreigners whose place of abode is at least sixty miles from Florence: their office continues for six months

and they cannot be re-appointed for ten years. Neither can any of the Podestà's judges return under an equal lapse of time unless by virtue of the particular decree of the state confirmed by all the councils; which rarely happens. This is done to prevent the rector having relations, friends, or acquaintances amongst the great or the small, but that he should be alone guided and influenced by the laws of the city, which it is his duty to observe. These three rectors have great authority and are held in high honour.

"First; the said podestà has attached to his court four judges, doctors of civil law: and sixteen notaries; because in his court there are pleadings in all civil actions; of inheritance, testaments, dowers, purchases, sales, and in all cases where there is a public instrument that requires legal investigation and confirmation. He has to maintain a large establishment and keep many horses, for which he receives a salary of 2300 florins in six months, and is lodged in a magnificent palace; and none can be podestà, nor captain in Florence, under the rank of count, marquis, or knight; and he must be also a Guelph: and for the Executor, it is necessary that he should be the contrary, and not of those ranks; but that he should be one of the people and a Guelph. The Captain, the Podestà and Executor have authority over all the condemned and banished; as well as over homicides, thefts, robberies, forgeries, and in all criminal actions whatsoever.

"The *Captain*, as he is called, '*of the People*' and his court, are for the protection of the city the state and its government, and he has summary jurisdiction over those who make any attempt against the commonwealth. The *Executor* has summary jurisdiction only over the nobles in defence of the people; and this office was created in old times to repress the arrogance of the great.

"I will now proceed without saying more of the offices within the city; but those without are what remain to the citizens

and have salaries and rewards; and the principal of them are as follow. First the captains of Pisa, of Arezzo, of Volterra; who are lords of those places for their half year of office; and they have unbounded summary and legal authority for the protection of their charge. Then follow the Podestàs of Pisa, Arezzo, and Pistoia; the Captains of Cortona and Borgo San Sepolcro; the Podestàs of Prato, Colle, San Gimignano, Monte Pulciano and others, who all have civil and criminal jurisdiction with many judges and attendants and are much honoured. Then follow the vicars of San Miniato, the Val-di-Nievole, Pescia, Firenzuola, Poppi, the Casentino and Anghiari, besides three in the Pisan territory. After these come the Captains of the Pistoian Alps, Romagna, and Castrocaro, the Podestà of Castiglione-Aretino; the Captain of the Pisan Maremma; besides a number of other Podestàs too numerous to narrate even were it desired.

"To these offices are appointed the best and most discreet citizens who go into those places some to gain honour, some riches; some one thing, some another, and it often happens that there are those who succeed in acquiring what they wanted either wholly or partially, and sometimes the contrary, that is shame and injury; because the deeds of the Florentines cannot easily be hidden; too many eyes are upon them; and he that doeth well gets the merit of it, and he that doeth ill is soon known, and is punished, and corrected, and castigated, according to what is due to justice, and for an example to others. And when these officers return to Florence from the said places, the works they have done are well examined, and each is rewarded according to his desert. And by virtue of this justice the good are always invited and encouraged to do well, and the wicked and evil-doers are terrified and punished; and good increases, and ill decreases; and concord follows in the city amongst the great, and the small, and the middling; each honoured according to his rank,

and according to his worth; and from this proceeds a melody so sweet that it is felt in heaven and moves the saints to love this city and defend her from any that want to disturb a state so tranquil and serene" *.

COTEMPORARY MONARCHS.—England, Scotland, France, Spain, Portugal, German Emperor, Greek Emperor, Ottoman Empire all unchanged. Naples: Robert the Good to 1343, then Johanna I.—Sicily: Peter II. to 1342, then Louis.—Popes: Benedict XII. to 1342, then Clement. VI.

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* Historia di Firenze di Goro Dati, Lib. ix.

CHAPTER XXI.

FROM A.D. 1344 TO A.D. 1349.

FLORENCE which by the Italians of the middle ages was held to be one of the noblest cities in the world was from her civil broils becoming every day more unfortunate: since 1314, if the Lombard war be excepted which was more brilliant than useful, almost constant ill-luck attended her measures; and this is by cotemporary authors attributed to the self-interested and exclusively personal objects of her rulers which rendered them insensible to every feeling of real patriotism. A fierce intractable spirit pervaded every political sect and the public good was but an empty watch-word to the sons of faction; besides this the mania of politics had become so absorbing that the greater part of her merchants quitting their shops and their warehouses, hastened to take an active part in the public discussions and assemblies of the commonwealth *. Yet while war, tyranny, and revolution were thus shaking her, the rest of Italy was far from being in an attitude of repose: Pisa feverish at home was at outward

A.D. 1344.

* "La gente nuova e i subiti guadagni
Orgoglio, e dismisura han generata,
Fiorenza, in te, sì che tu già ten pianger!"
Dante, Infer., Canto xvi.

An upstart multitude and sudden gains
Pride and excess, O Florence! have in thee
Engender'd, so that now in tears thou mourn'st!
Cary's Dante.

war with the Malespini and Visconti; Mantua and Milan made common cause against Ferrara and Verona; the Correggi, continually worried by their domestic enemies, disposed of Parma to the house of Este, from whom Lucchino Visconti forced it in 1346: Padua suffered from licentiousness, murder, and usurpation: Venice was tranquil; but Bologna writhed under the crushing tread of the Peppoli, and the petty tyrants of Romagna were plunged in wars, treachery, and bloodshed. In the midst of this, half the Peninsula was ravaged by a horde of merciless robbers the disbanded instruments of ambition, and thus a wide wave of destruction swept over Italy. Nor were Transalpine countries more calm or happy: Germany was disturbed by the imperial struggles against papal implacability and the movements of its discontented princes; France while withering under the rod of Philip was overrun by the victorious English, and England was half ruined by the effort. Christian Spain was disturbed by internal wars; Sicily was unceasingly vexed, but still unconquered by the persevering efforts of Robert; and after his death Naples itself became the theatre of domestic convulsions debauchery and blood: but some of this requires more detailed relation.

Robert King of Naples died in the month of January 1343 after a long and not inglorious reign, having survived for half a year his nephew Carobert or Carlo-Uberto king of Hungary the legitimate sovereign of Naples whom by the Pope's favour he had excluded from that inheritance; and Giovanna his eldest grand-daughter, a girl of sixteen and wife of Andrea brother to Louis king of Hungary, became heiress to the crown. Robert had played a busy part in the affairs of Italy and possessed many useful qualities; he made wise laws; was accounted just; encouraged arts sciences and literature; was himself deeply learned, and died with the world's applause: but he was ambitious, warlike, and imbued with all the fierceness of the Guelphic spirit; qualities which in that age rather

increased than lessened his reputation, so that according to the standard of the time he stood deservedly high in the world's estimation. The unquiet reign of Giovanna also contributed to throw a brighter gleam over his memory and augment the general regret; not that she seems to have been deficient in sense or firmness, but her extreme youth exposed her to temptations and dangers which an equally young and inexperienced husband was incompetent to repel. Robert had bequeathed her his kingdom to reign alone, but with a proviaion that Andrea should also be crowned at the age of twenty-two: they were however scarcely seated on the throne when a certain Friar Robert and other Hungarian followers of her husband gradually began to absorb the powers of government until Giovanna found herself a Queen only in name, and together with her rude and indolent husband, almost a prisoner in the hands of strangers. The royal kinsmen or "*Reali*," as they were called, and the Neapolitan barons retired to their castles in disgust, and despising Andrea's unwarlike indolence joined the prince of Tarento who was then preparing an expedition for Greece where he afterwards gained some honour. Disputes subsequently arose between the royal couple, each being ambitious of independent power; these were encouraged by the Reali for their own views; factions became rife, and Friar Robert foreseeing his own downfall in the increasing public disgust, invited King Louis to take possession of the throne as the rightful heir of Charles Martel and Carobert: Louis preferred making a direct application to the Pope for his brother's investiture, not as the husband of Giovanna, but as rightful heir to the crown of Naples. These negotiations were long continued, but the Queen was solemnly crowned, duly invested with the kingdom, and did homage to Clement VI. on the last day of August 1344, Friar Robert still maintaining the ascendant. The influence of Louis was however sufficient to procure a bull for his brother's coronation

long before the period designed by King Robert, a circumstance that created so much alarm in consequence of Andrea's unpopularity, that several of the Neapolitan barons with the connivance of Charles Duke of Durazzo who had married the Queen's sister, and others of the Reali, all of whom had their particular views on the throne, determined to prevent this ceremony by murdering Andrea: this they accomplished on the eighteenth of September 1345 at the city of Aversa, in the following manner.

The royal couple had not been long retired to rest when one of the bedchamber women informed Andrea that important despatches requiring his instant attention had arrived from Naples. It is said by some that the Queen seemed troubled, and made an effort to detain her husband; he however rose and left the chamber the door of which was instantly shut: the conspirators waited for him in a portico between the Queen's bedroom and the council-chamber and believing that he wore a magic ring the gift of his mother which preserved him from iron or poison threw a silken noose round his neck and after a hard struggle hung him from a balcony over the garden where other conspirators caught hold of his legs and finished the deed.

While this tragedy proceeded, Andrea's nurse Isolda, who had accompanied him to Naples and rarely quitted his sight, awakened by the noise rushed into the royal chamber and trembling demanded her child. The Queen was alone, seated near the bed, with her face buried in her hands, and she answered confusedly: Isolda still more frightened flew with a torch to the window; but the murderers having done their principal work fled in alarm, leaving the lifeless body extended before her eyes on the grass below. Isolda's screams soon roused the drunken Hungarian guards, the castle, and all the city, and baffled the conspirators' design of burying their victim in the garden. It can scarcely be supposed that Giovanna was

entirely innocent of this deed, but she has able advocates, and the truth seems involved in equal mystery with the conduct of Queen Mary in our own eventful history: public opinion was against her at the time, but the passions of men, their hate, self-interest and ambition, ran as fiercely at Naples in the fourteenth century as in Britain in the sixteenth. It was nevertheless a deed to electrify all Europe even in a barbarous age, but less by the act itself than the rank and importance of the victim. The kingdom was instantly convulsed, armed and angry men sprang up like spectres; many held to the Queen who had power, treasure, and the Castle of Naples in her hands: amongst these the most conspicuous was Louis brother of the Prince of Tarento who was supposed to have been her lover and now aspired to her hand; the Duke of Durazzo headed another faction and opposed him; the Prince of Tarento led a third: disorder everywhere abounded; and in the midst of all King Louis was preparing an army of wild Hungarians rather to possess himself of the throne than revenge the murder of his kinsman. Such was the state of Naples in 1346, three years after the death of Robert*.

The Venetians about this epoch were besieging Zara which had revolted; its citizens with the offer of their sovereignty, implored the aid of Louis who promptly accepted it and with a large army attempted to raise the siege; because if possessed of Zara he could have embarked for Puglia in defiance of Venice: but he was baffled: his provisions failed, his army retreated and for that year he was compelled to relinquish his object; yet being closely allied with Poland and still closer with Louis of Bavaria who held the Tyrol, he determined to enter Italy by the passes of that country. This emperor driven to desperation by

* Gio. Villani, Lib. xii., cap. x., xxvi., xxxv, lii., liii., lix.—Giannoni Stor. Civile di Napoli, vol. x., Lib. xxiii., —Muratori, Annali.—Sismondi, Rep. Ital., vol. iv., cap. xxxvi.—Angelo di Costanzo, Istoria di Napoli, vol. i., Lib. vi., p. 353; and vol. ii., Lib. vii., p. 52.—Cronica et Historia di Napoli di Fra. Luigi Vulcani, Lib. ii., cap. iv., p. 504, MS.

the implacable Clement who contemptuously refused all his advances and humiliations, joined his Hungarian namesake and engaged to invade Italy the following year with a force sufficient to take vengeance on the Pope, the Guelphs, and the detested house of Anjou. But Clement was neither disposed to permit this inroad nor see Giovanna a legitimate vassal of the church dethroned, however criminal he might think her: he therefore raised new enemies against the Bavarian and amongst them a competitor for the empire in the person of Charles Marquis of Moravia son of the now blind but still active John King of Bohemia. The election by Clement's exertions succeeded, but all Germany was disturbed; and the new Emperor's father having fallen a few weeks after at the battle of Crècy, Louis would soon have overwhelmed him had he not himself been killed by a fall from his horse in October 1347; then Charles IV. was acknowledged both by church and empire *.

The misfortunes of Florence gave Pisa a more commanding aspect; Volterra and Pistoia had sought her protection, and she was in close alliance with Lucchino Visconti, by far the most powerful prince of Italy (and excepting the kings of England, France, and Hungary) of all Europe; he maintained a standing army of from three to five thousand men-at-arms and was lord of seventeen great cities in Lombardy †. This attitude did not last, but for a while gave an unreal importance to the Pisan republic which besides being impoverished by war, was, on a sudden quarrel with Lucchino, brought into new difficulties. Giovanni Visconti d' Oleggio when liberated from Florence, trusting to the power, and probably with the connivance of Lucchino, repaired to Pisa and after having vainly demanded compensation for his losses conspired with the two

* Gio. Villani, Lib. xii., cap. lx., lxvii. † Gio. Villani, Lib. xii., cap. lxxiv. —Muratori, Annali.

Castracani's assistance, to usurp that lordship. The plot being detected one head was chopped off, the Castracani fled from Lucca, and Giovanni himself was unceremoniously expelled: Lucchino enraged at the insult instantly imprisoned some Pisan hostages whom he had engaged to release, and with an insolent message sent his kinsman back at the head of two thousand men-at-arms to revenge himself. Nothing could be more pleasing to the Florentines than this quarrel, who to favour it, maliciously made over the advantageous post of Pietrasanta to Lucchino's brother-in-law the Bishop of Luni, while Visconti's anger was further excited by seeing Serazzano, Laveuza, Massa, and other places still withheld from the family of Malespini his near kinsmen, notwithstanding all his threats and remonstrances *.

Taking advantage of the Florentine gift, Lucchino's forces assembled at Pietrasanta in 1343 forced the Pisan entrenchments with great slaughter at Rotaia, and after the usual course of devastation without any decisive event, entered the unwholesome Maremma where they were soon thinned by malaria: losing amongst others, Arrigo Castracani who with his brother inherited all their father's activity and ambition without his talents †.

Early in the year 1345 Pisa concluded treaties with Mastino della Scala, Peppoli of Bologna, Ferrara, and some of the lords of Romagna against Lucchino: Florence although invited refused to join, and the Milanese army opened the campaign by a repetition of the last year's inroads which continued until May when the Marquis Malespini died; and as he was the great cause and fomenter of this war Genoa now stepped in as a mediator to restore tranquillity: the troops were recalled and a treaty signed, by which Pisa retained possession of Lucca, Lucchino received 100,000 florins for his expenses

* Istorie Pistolesi.—Gio. Villani, Lib. xii., cap. xxiv., xxvi.—Tronci, Annali Pisani.—Simondi, vol. iv., c. xxxvii.

† Gio. Villani, Lib. xii., cap. xxix.

and the wretched people suffered as usual; but with this ended for the moment all Lombard interference in the affairs of Tuscany*. A.D. 1344.

In Genoa the Doge Simone Boccanegra after a reign of four years hearing that the Grimaldi, Doria and Spinola families with other nobles were coming in arms against him, publicly renounced his dignity before a general assembly of the people and retired with all his family to Pisa. A Doge from the popular class was promptly elected who instantly repressed the aristocracy, and in January 1345 induced the citizens of Savona to expel the whole of their nobility: this was a signal for Genoa herself, which followed their example the next day, with some opposition however from the Squarciafichi and Salvatichi families, which was soon overcome, as well as a subsequent attack of the Doria faction. The Doge, Giovanni di Monterena immediately allied himself with Lucchino Visconti who supplied five hundred men-at-arms and in July 1345 after some partial success succeeded in reëstablishing peace between the two contending factions†.

Both this and the peace with Pisa were acceptable to Lucchino, who with Filippino Gonzaga of Mantua was sufficiently occupied in prosecuting the war against Verona, Ferrara, and Bologna, and contemplating the ultimate acquisition of Parma. A truce had been made by the belligerents for three years from March 1343, as well as between Mastino della Scala and Ubertino da Carrara of Padua, to the great annoyance of Venice, who feared for her recent acquisition of Treves: and it was during this suspension of hostilities that the Correggi of Parma harassed by Mastino's enmity and by many exiled families of that city, determined to sell it to the Marquis Obizzo of Este for 70,000 florins. The bargain was concluded in October 1344 with Mastino's consent, who was fearful of Parma's

* Gio. Villani, Lib. xii., cap. xxxviii. † Gio. Villani, Lib. xii., cap. xxxvii. —Istorie Pistolesi.

falling into the hands of Lucchino Visconti; and a safe-conduct being granted by Filippino through his states, Obizzo lost no time in taking formal possession. But such an occasion was too tempting for the morality of that day, and Filippino da Gonzaga having gained Lucchino by the prospect of acquiring Parma, determined in concert with him to break the truce, his plighted word, and every other tie that even in those times was held sacred; and with eight hundred Milanese cavalry make the Marquis of Ferrara prisoner on his return through Reggio.

The ambuscade was secretly prepared, Obizzo's escort suddenly attacked and upwards of seven hundred of them made prisoners; but the marquis himself, who with the rest of his company was behind the main body, escaped safely to Parma and subsequently reached Modena by a surer road. There was a general burst of indignation against this treachery; but Filippino nowise abashed declared that he had granted a safe-conduct to go, but none to return; and moreover followed it up with direct hostilities, assisted by all the power of Milan.

On Obizzo's side were Mastino and Peppoli, and war raged in all its fury until the middle of 1346 when Mastino made a secret treaty with Lucchino: Obizzo thus abandoned and seeing that he never could hold Parma in the midst of his enemies, determined to make peace with Visconti and cede that city for about what its acquisition had cost him: a reconciliation afterwards took place with Filippino and general peace was restored to Lombardy in December 1346.

The acquisition of Parma added not a little to Visconti's power; he had already become lord of Asti and Alexandria, had acquired supreme dominion over Lunigiana; and in the following year Bobbio, Tortona, Alba, Cherasco, and other places as far as the Alps were added to his dominions; so that he began to be dreaded by the rest of Lombardy, and continual wars were the consequence *. But such wars would scarcely

* Muratori, Annali.

have proved so constant or mischievous had they been confided to native valour instead of German mercenaries; this practice had now become so general that the bulk of every Italian army was composed of them, and when peace arrived they were thrown loose on society until again purchased by the next person who chanced to be in want of their assistance.

Lucchino Visconti by an economical administration of his resources was the first to reduce these freebooters into the form of a standing army, and there seems to have been a steady daring valour in their character that at all times gave them a confident superiority over Italian soldiers. It was by the dismissal of some veteran bands of German cavalry that Pisa rendered her army inefficient against Lucchino who promptly received them, but whether free or serving, these troops assumed a formidable aspect: well armed, numerous, disciplined, and experienced in war, with their equipments and formation complete, they felt their strength and instead of disbanding, as was usual when unemployed, kept well together and were determined to use it. They were persuaded to take this step by "*Guarnieri*" or Werner a German adventurer who became their leader, and being paid by Pisa at the rate of four florins a month for each horseman were, with the consent of her Lombard allies and Ordilaffi lord of Forli, sent covertly against Bologna in revenge for the constant assistance which she gave to Florence during the late war *.

By secret directions from the Duke of Athens in concert with Pisa they first entered the Senese dominions robbing and killing all before them until they were bribed by a heavy contribution to leave that territory; Perugia then felt their weight and the duke's enmity, for both these states had refused to surrender their liberties into his hands: the country of Arezzo was next ravaged; they afterwards crossed into Romagna with

* Istorie Pistolesi.—Gio. Villani, Lib. xii., cap. ix.—Sardi, Historie Ferraresi, Lib. vi., p. 111.—Hist. de Principi di Este, di Gio. Bat. Pigna, Lib. iv., p. 366, et seq. Venice, 1572.

fire and sword and every scourge of war; Rimini and Fano were blighted in their course; each tyrant employed them in turn and the master of to-day was the victim of to-morrow: they called themselves the "*Great Company*" and were soon augmented by the junction of almost every German in Italy besides many Italian bands: their camp was the theatre of every villany; four thousand cavalry; a numerous infantry; boys, followers, prostitutes; every form of human brutality: no law; no order: plunder, rape, conflagration, murder: all was suffered and all applauded by their chief: glorying in his wickedness this miscreant outdid even his own myrmidons in blasphemy by carrying in silver letters on his breast, I am "DUKE WERNER, LORD OF THE GREAT COMPANY; THE ENEMY OF MERCY, OF PITY, AND OF GOD."

Such was the army that now directed its march on Bologna: Peppoli opposed it with a strong force, but more effectually with money; yet so great was the oppression in that city that a body of the citizens endeavoured to admit the fiend in order to destroy the tyrant! Gold and power prevailed and the tyrant triumphed. Finally this hurricane drove onward into Lombardy where for some months it ravaged Reggio, Modena, and Parma, and when these countries were exhausted Werner proposed to revisit Bologna but found such a force opposed to him that he deemed it better to treat, and Peppoli with his Lombard allies and the Marquis of Ferrara offered him a certain sum to repass the Alps; they were accordingly paid, marched off in successive detachments too small for mischief, and returned by degrees into Germany; but this nefarious company became the mother of great calamities*.

From the foregoing sketch it will be seen that no general bond of union existed amongst the various states of Italy; no common political or social object fixed them; they were com-

* Istorie Pistolesi.—Gio. Villani, Lib. xii., cap. ix.—Sismondi, vol. iv., cap. xxxvi.

patriots in name, language, manners, and religion, but not in national feeling: personal ambition, self-aggrandisement, and private interest were the prime springs of action, and were set in motion by the most diabolical passions of human nature: each petty lordship and greater state was a centre of disturbance to its neighbours, and commonly a volcano within itself: the rulers throughout, whether one or many, were always despotic and generally tyrannical; and where the word of rulers is law legitimate self-indulgence is sooner exhausted than the appetite appeased. Civil liberty as we have it, was scarcely understood, while political freedom mostly bordered upon license, and was always the plaything of faction: a better system was theoretically understood and acknowledged in Florence; the wish too, partially existed; good laws were devised, but badly executed, and never long withstood the assaults of public immorality. Nevertheless this general agitation encouraged mental elasticity, and human energies are seldom exerted for unmixed evil; a bold spirit of political liberty pervaded the mass, especially in republican states; and human thought, and speech and industry were left comparatively free. It was not the liberty of our own time and country, but it suited the ideas of that age; the people were satisfied to be the acknowledged source of power and to enjoy the privilege of choosing their government, without seeming to trouble themselves about its despotic acts, unless widely spread and multiplied; it was their own idol and they worshipped it.

Amongst these various elements of modern liberty these germs of political regeneration, the most sagacious and persevering was perhaps the republic of Florence; in that commonwealth at least the main stream of public opinion ran against abuse while a thousand private eddies vitiated its waters or disturbed its action: the middle and lower classes, those who feel the strain without sharing the movement, were ever jealously watching the conduct of their superiors with as much honesty as

was left untouched by their more decided exclusion from official temptations. At the epoch in which we now resume our narrative they were however in power; they in fact ruled the state, and an aristocracy so recently subdued was still the great object of their fears: hence as early as December of the past year no less than seventeen members of the Bardi, Rossi, Frescobaldi, Donati, Pazzi, and Cavicciuli families, were unjustly exiled although they had already retired to their castles expressly to avoid giving either offence or suspicion to the people. The same spirit again showed itself in a league made with Perugia, Siena, and Arezzo, to pull down the Tarlati and all others that might attempt to usurp the government of any free state: new lists were made of exiles and public rebels whose official sentences had been burned in the revolution, and harsh laws were again promulgated against the nobles, by which relations became responsible for each other's conduct although really or nominally enemies. Nor did this vindictive spirit stop here; many nobles had retired to the various courts of Italy; Milan Verona Ferrara Bologna Naples, all had sheltered and employed them; but they were now denied this refuge; their intercourse with tyrants was jealously regarded, and on pain of being proclaimed rebels they were ordered to return and reside with their persecutors. In this temper of the people it was unlikely that the great offender should escape, nor did he deserve their favour: the Duke of Athens from the moment of his return to France never ceased importuning Philip for redress against Florence and compensation for his pretended losses by no less an act than the seizure and spoliation of all Florentine merchants settled in that country! This was a tender point; for whatever prosperity accrued to Florence from her vast and universal commerce, she was sensitive as a cobweb and the slightest touch for good or evil, at the extremities, instantly vibrated to the centre. Ambassadors were promptly despatched to place the duke's conduct in its true

light before King Philip while a reward of 10,000 florins was publicly offered at Florence for his head: the Florentine merchants trembled, but the popular government was bold; and moreover decreed that a contemptuous painting should be made of him and his infamous minions on the wall of the Podestà's palace as a memorial both for citizens and strangers. This insult redoubled Walter's enmity and in the following February actually brought an embassy from Philip to demand reparation; but the Florentines easily made their case good against him and the ambassadors were treated with peculiar honour. Neither king nor duke were however so easily quieted, and letters of reprisal were at once issued authorising the latter to arrest imprison and torture the Florentines at his pleasure, without risking life or limb, as traitors to their lord the Duke of Athens. The Florentine ambassadors were not heard, their offers of referring the cause to any tribunal out of France were scouted, and a general flight of the whole commercial body was the consequence *.

A.D. 1345.

Such was the precarious state of commercial persons and property in those days when the Italian merchants were designated by the contemptuous names of "*dog*," "*usurer*," and every other opprobrious epithet, because they justly demanded high interest for their money and a great price for their wares.

The Duke of Athens had reason to be content; for the public debt incurred by the purchase and war of Lucca in addition to his sweeping robberies, left the community totally unable to satisfy the demands of its creditors: the whole sum amounting to 670,000 florins was secured on public credit; but unable to liquidate so large an amount a plan was then adopted by government, and the first payment made in October 1345, which has been since followed with the most injurious consequences by all European nations.

A register was made containing the names of all public

* Gio. Villani, Lib. xii., cap. xxxvi., lvii.

creditors and to each of these was consigned a portion of the public revenue equal to five per cent. per annum paid monthly on the money due. The quantity of cash thus collected was vulgarly called "*Monte*" or "*Heap:*" it increased in war and diminished in peace; could be disposed of as other merchandise; varied in its value according to the circumstances of the time, or the hopes or fears of the parties; gave the government a greater command of money, and consequently a wider means of mischief; lightened the pains of taxation and imparted present strength with the certainty of future weakness; it was in short the first permanent funded debt of Florence, and probably of any other nation *.

Mastino della Scala however was far from content with this arrangement; he was engaged in war; demanded 100,000 florins; and becoming suspicious of Florence put not only the hostages but every Florentine merchant at Verona and Vicenza into prison: this was a hard act and the Marquis of Este at once interposed as a mediator; Mastino repaired in person to Ferrara, and a compromise was finally made for the immediate payment of 60,000 florins to liquidate the debt. It was not easy to raise this, but government accomplished it by promising any national creditor who would lend a sum equal to his existing claims, full payment of the double debt in two years: Mastino was thus satisfied, both merchants and hostages were set free, and the national debt confined within the bounds of the republic. Thus ended the folly of purchasing the city of Lucca, but not its consequences †.

Whatever might have been the defects of this exclusively democratic government, it was at least marked by a bold and vigorous assertion of its own dignity, not amidst the pride of power and conquest but in distress and poverty, a boldness that excited both censure and surprise; and this was particularly

* Gio. Villani, Lib. xii., cap. xxxvi. Rub. xii —Leon. Aretino, Lib. vii. —Mar. di Coppo Stefani, Lib. viii., † Gio. Villani, Lib. xii., cap. xlix.

manifested in its treatment of the clergy and inquisitor of Florence. Many of the nobles and Popolani Grassi belonged to the sacred orders where they carried all their wonted insolence along with them, and the more confidently from a reliance on certain ecclesiastical privileges which were supposed to raise them above any civil jurisdiction: on the other hand the inferior artisans, new to honours and unaccustomed to power, were not disposed to use their authority too meekly and far from unwilling to exert its utmost force in cases even remotely affecting the nobles and richer citizens. The conduct of the clergy had however become so offensive as to draw forth a decree which amongst other provisions declared, that if a priest were thenceforth to outrage a lay citizen he should, notwithstanding all pontifical briefs to the contrary, be prosecuted in the ordinary courts as if he were a simple layman, and be liable to the same punishment both in goods and person: and if he presumed to appeal either to the pope or any delegated ecclesiastical judge, his appeal should be disregarded and judgment given as if none were made, and his nearest relations rendered liable in person and property for its instantaneous withdrawal. Appeals of any sort to ecclesiastical judges whether from layman or priest, were at the same time forbidden in civil suits: this was to abate a custom then prevalent of embarrassing the legal judgments on private contracts, as well as in those numerous mercantile causes with which so many recent failures had filled the courts of Florence *.

The necessity and abstract justice of these measures as well as the commonwealth's strict right to uphold its judicial dignity are acknowledged by the honesty of Villani while his superstitious veneration for the church denies the lawfulness of using it to the prejudice of ecclesiastical rights: but the boldness of such an act at that epoch in the face of a rich and

* Gio. Villani, Lib. xii., cap. xliii.—March. di Coppo Stefani, Lib. viii., Rubrica 16.

imperious pontiff, may be easily conceived when both contemporary and subsequent writers either openly blame it as sacrilegious, or handle it with hesitation and delicacy as if fearful of being thought to approve of such a precedent; nor was so enlightened an audacity ever afterwards renewed until the memorable reign of Peter Leopold of Austria.

A serious quarrel with the pope and a malediction on all who had been instrumental in this invasion of church rights followed as a matter of course; the weakness of Bishop Acciaiuoli for making no opposition to this law was generally blamed by the devout, and attributed to depression of spirits consequent upon the misfortunes of his family which had suffered by the recent failures. Villani sharply reproaches him and adds, that the commonwealth was ill governed by the nobles, and worse by the Popolani, and at that time abounded with obscure and ignorant artisans without discretion, who ruled it at their pleasure. "May it please God," he continues, "that their administration turn out well, but I doubt it." The honest prejudices of this historian, himself one of the richer class of Popolani, were probably startled at the audacity of the new rulers and shocked at their severity even against Walter de Brienne; but he tacitly gives them the preference over their predecessors, sometimes covertly applauds, and is always too just to blame indiscriminately.

The government soon after displayed equal determination but accompanied with some barbarity, in a subsequent quarrel with the chief inquisitor of Florence.

Piero dell' Aquila a Franciscan monk of a haughty avaricious nature who held that office, was appointed by the Cardinal of Spain to act as his agent for the recovery of 12,000 florins due by the bankrupt company of Acciaiuoli: and as a better security for this debt the inquisitor caused Salvestro Baroncelli, one of the partners, to be arrested by three of the Podesta's messengers and other officers, as he came out from the prior's palace

with their permission and official escort. This insolent and illegal act created an immediate tumult; the palace guards joined those of the captain, rescued the prisoner and arrested the messengers, who were immediately sentenced to lose one hand and have ten years of banishment: even the Podestà after humbling himself before the indignant Seignory saved the rest of his officers from a similar fate only by proving that in their ignorance they had been misled by the messengers. Upon this Piero dell' Aquila retired in anger to Siena leaving an anathema on the priors and captain of the people unless Baroncelli were delivered up within six days.

This violent conduct was appealed against by a formal embassy to Clement which unfolded the whole proceeding with a complaint of the inquisitor's anterior practice of receiving bribes for pardons on false accusations of heresy: by this he had accumulated 7000 florins in two years when such a thing as a heretic scarcely existed in Florence. But he managed, they said, by catching at every unguarded expression and, if the offender were rich, twisting it into a crime against religion, to swell his official records, fill his private coffers, and simultaneously recommend himself as a zealous champion of the Catholic faith.

Clement notwithstanding his anger about the late edicts was compelled in justice to suspend the inquisitor and annul his acts; but the Florentines to prevent any repetition of such abuse made a decree after the example of Perugia, Spain, and other states, that forbid any future inquisitor to meddle with matters beyond his office or to impose a fine on Florentine citizens. If he could convict them of heresy, they might be most religiously burned, but not fined for their opinions or be any longer confined in the inquisitor's prisons: these were now abolished and those of the community made the common receptacle for all offenders. Besides this, public officers were forbidden to arrest any man at the instance of the inquisitor or

the bishops of Florence and Fiesole without orders from government. The armed attendants of the first and last were restricted to six, and those of the second to double that number; for the abuse of this privilege had arrived at such a height that no less than two hundred and fifty citizens carried arms against law under the auspices of Piero dell' Aquila and for his sole emolument, an example that was either set or followed by both the bishops.

The news of these innovations did not diminish Clement's discontent at the previous attacks on ecclesiastical power, wherefore the Cardinal of Spain chagrined at his own failure found no difficulty in fomenting so much ill-will at the court of Avignon that Florence was again thrown into such a state of commotion as required a second embassy to assuage.

These decided proceedings coupled with a pure democratic ascendancy in all the principal magistracies, was so grating to the nobles and Popolani Grassi that some partial intercourse took place between them, and this being perceived by the ruling powers a resolution was immediately passed to recal every public grant made to individual nobles for public services no matter how ancient: a hard measure, and the length of time that such rewards had been enjoyed rendered it also an unjust one, although most of these gifts were, not the proofs of a whole nation's gratitude, but that of an ascendant faction.

By this decree and without allowing any opportunity of defence, the Pazzi lost property which they had enjoyed for four-and-thirty years; the della Tosa family were similarly treated; and the Pini and others suffered in a like manner: the whole amount, a comparative trifle and taken rather through anger than principle, was spent on the Ponte Vecchio, this year terminated, and the Ponte a Santa Trinità, which was completed in 1346*.

* Gio. Villani, Lib. xii., cap. xliv.—Mar. di Coppo Stefani, Lib. viii., Rub. 617.—Leonardo Aretino, Lib. vii.—Sc. Ammirato, Lib. x.

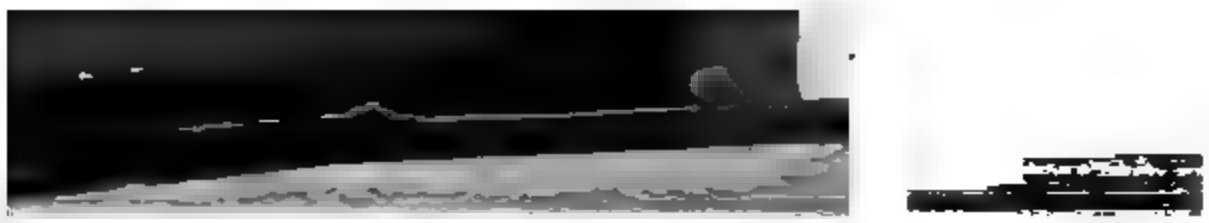
While government was thus employed commerce received a severe shock; the town was already full of bankrupts and the first failure of the Bardi and Peruzzi with its disastrous consequences has already been mentioned; but the resources of these potent houses appear to have exceeded their honesty, as notwithstanding the numbers that were ruined in their fall they now reappear as the great financial agents of England and Sicily trusted with enormous credits, and once more falling into a state of total bankruptcy. Edward III. owed to the Bardi alone 900,000 florins besides 600,000 to the Peruzzi, and 100,000 was due to each by the Sicilian monarch. The mania for speculation seems at this epoch to have pervaded Florence, for the number of inferior houses and private individuals that were again ruined by these foreign loans in the hands of the Bardi and Peruzzi, is spoken of as enormous; and consequently the extent of public injury in a small community so closely linked, and solely depending on commerce, can scarcely be appreciated. "O cursed and ravenous wolf," exclaims Villani with all the bitterness of a sufferer, "O cursed and ravenous wolf swoln with that insatiable greediness that rules or blinds our distracted citizens who through their thirst of gaining money from the great, place their own and their neighbours' substance at their disposal! And by this is our republic so lost and desolate that scarcely any property remains with our people save amongst some few artificers and money-lenders who by their exactions consume and gather together for themselves the scattered poverty of our subjects and citizens." This honest man had good cause to rue the evils he describes, for the failure of the Buonaccorsi brought him to poverty and it is also said to prison, along with many other victims; even the Bardi now resigned everything to their creditors and from all their princely domains only paid about thirty per cent. of what they owed, while the Peruzzi paid one-third less on their real property and compounded for sixteen shil-

lings in the pound on the recovery of what was due by the two sovereigns*.

Thus general impoverishment served as an additional incentive to legislation on a favourite subject amongst the graver citizens; for in Florence female fancy and extravagance were continually at war with masculine prudence and gravity; so that sumptuary laws were repeatedly enacted and form a prominent chapter in the "*Florentine Statute.*" Especial officers were appointed to execute them while female ingenuity still baffled legislation: the priors however showed a fair example by commencing with their own table and then proceeded to more useful reforms.

A.D. 1346. In order to remedy the many legal abuses and excessive delay in litigated questions of real property, by which then as now the poorest was commonly ruined, the priors were invested with authority to form a board of two citizens from each quarter who were to register all real property in the Florentine dominions as well as every subsequent alienation of it, and thus establish a secure title without the necessity of further proof; a vast benefit everywhere, but especially in that time and country where the lawless great with utter contempt for public opinion despoiled the poor by advancing bold unfounded claims based only on riches and the law's delay. Nor were the criminal courts unheeded; for a feeling was abroad that many innocent people at various times had been condemned and executed by unjust judges, wherefore a law was about this time passed to forbid the Podestà's twelve foreign assessors from being chosen in any place within thirty miles of his ordinary residence, and while in Florence to separate them entirely from him and the citizens, except when employed on official business. Other restrictions were added, all theoretically laudable, but useless when unsupported by just and moral feeling in the people or honest principles on the bench: in the

* Gio. Villani, Lib. xii., cap. lv.



same spirit a new magistracy called the "*Fourteen Defenders of Liberty*" was created to enforce these and all other public ordinances. Giovanni da Cerreto who became gonfalonier in May was not however quite satisfied with the provisions that his predecessors had made for preserving the dignity and authority of government; he therefore issued a decree that stamped with the crime of rebellion any assistance afforded to persons who presumed to appeal from the national tribunals or endeavoured to procure the interference of foreign courts with the judgments awarded in those of Florence, particularly when in favour of government*. This laudable jealousy of ecclesiastical meddling went hand in hand with the fear of imperial aggressions and Ghibeline influence, both of which still continued so strong that the election of Charles IV. although the chosen candidate of Clement and contemptuously called the "priests' emperor," aroused an ancient spirit along with a new and formidable party in the political factions of Florence: Henry of Luxemburg and their beleaguered city were not yet forgotten; John of Bohemia's enmity was comparatively recent, and his son was naturally mistrusted on the imperial throne. A league with Siena for ten years to support Pope Clement and the church was the first symptom of public suspicion; but the captains of the "*Party Guelph*" now began to interfere with the government and as conservators of that interest procured a law to exclude from public office all district citizens unless three generations of their family, including themselves, had been born in Florence or the Contado. This law was considered the more necessary because many of the inferior artificers from the neighbouring towns were amongst the Consuls of Arts and under that title found a place in the scrutiny-list; they raised the influence of the lower orders; were chosen priors, colleagues, gonfaloniers, and exercised all these offices with such presumption as to disgust the old and genuine citizens.

* S. Ammirato, Lib. x., p. 497.

This was an insidious attack on the real democracy, but the ostensible motive was an apprehension of fostering and augmenting Ghibeline sentiments in the administrative councils by the introduction of these strangers, whose opinions were either known or suspected, at a moment too when new fears had arisen from the emperor's intention of visiting Italy; and especially as amongst them were Flemings, Germans, and other foreigners who in asserting a Florentine birth and Guelphic principles could give no satisfactory account of their progenitors*.

This incipient interference of the party Guelph in state politics was the commencement of important changes, particularly the elevation of that magistracy to a pernicious height with the despotic exercise of unconstitutional powers that brought death and exile on many a citizen and ultimate destruction to liberty. Encouraged by the success of their efforts the "Party" soon after attempted another reform of the scrutiny-lists where, as they declared, the names of many Ghibelines had been introduced amongst the consuls of the twenty-one arts; but the latter were still so powerful that a sedition was apprehended if this inquisition were pushed too hastily forward.

A.D. 1347. To satisfy the Party Guelph however a decree issued which annulled the official eligibility of any Ghibeline whose father or himself, from the year 1300 to the date of the law, had been declared a rebel, who had lived in a rebellious town, or had joined in open war against the commonwealth. The penalty was 1000 florins both to electors and elected, with the forfeiture of the latter's head if not paid within a given time; and nobody, unless known to be a true Guelph and friend of the church, although not a rebel or enemy of Florence, could enjoy any public office whatever under a penalty of 500 florins besides 1000 to be levied on the seignory before whom he should be accused if they did not condemn him after his

* Gio. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. lxxii.—Mar. di Coppo Stefani, Lib. viii., Rub. 632, Note.

ineligibility had been proved. To accomplish this, six respectable witnesses were necessary, all previously known and approved by the consuls of the trade to which the accused belonged if an artisan; and if not; by the priors and their twelve good counsellors.

This incipient inquiry into the political principles of public men led to important consequences, as will be seen hereafter; but its immediate effects were the condemnation of several artisans and the refusal of office by many others through fear of similar treatment: their places were of course filled up by staunch Guelphs and men of higher rank; and every low weed thus removed left the ground more open for taller plants; but now the noxious shadow of the party Guelph began to spread unwholesomely over the commonwealth. This baneful influence was further strengthened in the following July when six priors, with an intention of indirectly paralysing the new law, endeavoured to enact that no witnesses whatever should be valid against a Ghibeline unless previously approved of by the priors, and their colleagues: the attempt created much disturbance, the party Guelph authoritatively opposed it, and the law of January was confirmed with more severe penalties than before *.

But these apprehensions of Charles and the Ghibelines were not confined to Florence, wherefore a Guelphic league was in the same spirit concluded with Siena, Perugia, Arezzo, and other places; amongst them San Miniato, which driven to desperation by aristocratic tyranny surrendered herself and her liberties for five years to the Florentines. Known Ghibelines were further persecuted by a prohibition to use armorial bearings; and to show public hatred in a more significant manner towards the Duke of Athens, all those priors appointed by him were coupled with the former in this insulting and contemptuous decree; and where they had already assumed arms and placed

* Gio. Villani, Lib. xii., cap. lxxix., xcii.

them on, or in their houses; as was customary after the honours of the priorship; they were compelled to remove the escutcheon in disgrace under penalty of 1000 florins. Public officers of all descriptions except those in charge of prisons were also forbidden by this seignory to carry offensive arms, and every possible precaution seems to have been taken to prevent those private affrays and sudden acts of bloodshed which the manners of the age so much permitted and encouraged: these were the chief proceedings of a low and real democracy *.

About this period considerable interest was excited in Florence by the appearance of an embassy from the celebrated Nicola di Rienzi tribune of the Roman people whose bold rapid and somewhat theatrical career had become the wonder and admiration of Europe. The long protracted absence of pontifical government had made Rome a scene of anarchy: no law, no justice, no civil protection; every man acted for himself alone, without reference to the safety or the rights of others: the two senators Orsini, and Colonna, each with his own faction, were hereditary and deadly enemies: the public revenue was plundered, the pope defrauded, the streets infested with assassins, the roads with robbers, and pilgrims no longer visited the sacred shrines, for none were safe from violence: the ancient temples everywhere rose into fortresses and nothing but war and slaughter were seen in the Eternal City. In the midst of this confusion appeared a certain Nicola or Cola son of one Lorenzo or Rienzo a petty innkeeper, and Madalena a washerwoman of Rome. Cola di Rienzo's own exertions had already raised him to the rank of notary; his naturally refined intellect was cultivated until he became a perfect scholar; he excelled in all literary acquirements and was gifted with powers of elocution far beyond the common standard: an enthusiastic admirer of ancient Rome he existed only in her authors, revelled amidst her antiquities, deciphered

* Gio. Villani, Lib. xii., cap. xcii.

her mouldering inscriptions, and lamented her fallen state; but while still musing over her misfortunes heroically resolved to accomplish her deliverance. His extraordinary abilities, displayed in an embassy to Avignon where Petrarch is said to have been joined with him, so struck Pope Clement VI. that he immediately made him notary to the apostolical chamber at Rome although deaf to the eloquence that would fain have persuaded him to return there. In this distinguished post Cola gained universal respect by his integrity, and soon began to declaim openly against the oppressors of his country: at a public meeting in the capitol he fearlessly reproached the leading factions with their crimes but gained nothing except a blow from Andreozzo Colonna, and an indecent insult from an underling. His next feat was the exhibition of an allegorical picture on the walls of the capitol which told the melancholy story of Rome and the fate of more ancient nations under the withering effects of injustice, and when the people's attention was once excited, he suddenly poured forth one of those powerful strains of eloquence in which he so much excelled, and with all the spirit of the Gracchi denounced the nobles and their disgraceful tyranny, even with more reason than those worthy and renowned citizens. On another occasion he produced a decree of the ancient senate which he had recently discovered, and showed it to the people as an act of that body investing Vespasian with the authority of emperor: after this he again harangued them on the antique majesty of the Roman people who made emperors their vicars by clothing them with their own rights and power. "These princes," said he, "only "existed by the will of your ancestors; and you, you have "allowed the two eyes of Rome to be torn away; you have "allowed both pope and emperor to abandon your walls "and be no longer dependent on your will." The consequence of this, as he told them, was banished peace, exhausted strength, discord, the blood of numbers shed in private

war; and that city, once the queen of nations, reduced so low as to be their scorn and mockery. "Romans," he continued, "you have no peace: your lands lie untilled: the jubilee "approaches; you have no provisions: and if those who come "as pilgrims to Rome should find you unprovided they will "carry the very stones away in the fury of their hunger, and "even the stones will not suffice for such a multitude." The people applauded and the nobles mocked him: like the first Brutus they even invited him for amusement to their revels and made him harangue them like a mountebank while they ridiculed his eloquent truths and fearless denunciations. Allegorical paintings were from time to time posted in various parts of the city with corresponding labels, such as "*The hour of justice approaches, wait thou for her,*" and, "*Within a brief space the Romans will reassume their ancient and good state.*"

But Rienzo was still ridiculed and his proceedings considered as the mere visions of learned vanity: it was not with pictures and sententious mottos, they said, that Rome could now be regenerated, something more was requisite: Cola was also of this opinion, and seeing that the public mind, whether in gravity or mockery, was now alive to the subject, immediately resolved on more vigorous action. Secretly assembling a considerable number of the most determined spirits from every class except the very highest nobility, he addressed them on the Aventine Hill and conjured them to assist him in the deliverance of their common country: he unfolded his plans; assured them of the pope's acquiescence; developed the resources of Rome and the wholesome vigour of an honest popular government; and then administering an oath to each he dismissed the assembly.

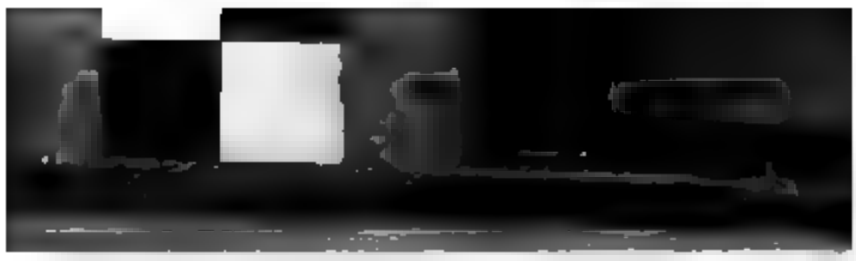
On the nineteenth of May 1347 taking advantage of the potent Stefano Colonna's temporary absence with most of his forces, Cola proceeded in solemn but unarmed procession to the capitol where he laid his whole enterprise open before the

assembled people: shouts of enthusiastic approbation rolled through the crowd and Rienzo was instantly invested with sovereign authority. Old Stefano Colonna soon returned and haughtily refused to quit Rome again at the command of the dictator whose orders he treated with contempt: on hearing this Rienzo suddenly assembled the armed citizens, and by a vigorous assault on the stronghold of Stefano mastered all his forces and compelled him to fly from the city with only a single domestic: the other barons succumbed, the town was guarded, fortified, and soon cleared of those ferocious bands of miscreants that had so long infested it under aristocratic licence and protection: a parliament then assembled which sanctioned every act, and bestowed on Rienzo the high-sounding titles of TRIBUNE OF THE PEOPLE, and LIBERATOR OF ROME.

Thus was Roman liberty for a moment restored by a single member of her humblest class of citizens: such is the power of eloquence, when tyranny prepares its way and honesty dictates its periods! The Muse of Poetry too, has thrown her wreath over the brows of that "*Spirto gentil*" that dared, though but for a season, to drive oppression from those ancient walls, which the world still feared, and loved, and trembled at*.

An oath of obedience to the tribune was administered, and generally taken, even by some of the Orsini, Colonnesi, Savelli, and several others of the proudest barons who now bowed to his authority: the roads were made safe; the markets soon filled; the poor received protection, severe and instantaneous justice was distributed; no murders, no violations, no outrages now remained unpunished and all became so tranquil, safe, and orderly that a purse of gold might have been openly and securely carried through the streets of Rome. With all this excellence there was yet a certain vanity about Rienzo that

* See Petrarca's Canzone generally though perhaps erroneously supposed to be addressed to Cola, beginning "*Spirto gentil, che quelle membra reggi.*" "*L'antiche mura, ch' ancor teme, ed ama, E trema 'l mondo,*" &c.



argued weakness and instability: he assumed the pompous titles of "*Nicola the Severe and Clement;*" "*Liberator of Rome;*" "*The Zealous for the good of Italy,*" "*The Lover of the World,*" and "*The August Tribune:*" but upright magistrates were created, many chiefs of factions who disturbed the country were executed, the noxious and nonjuring great were banished, and a gleam of tranquillity burst over the long-benighted city.

To save Rome was not sufficient; Cola aspired to be the liberator of all Italy and to restore the Roman commonwealth to its ancient national plenitude: he therefore wrote pompous epistles to the Italian states and princes and so imposing had been his success that they were everywhere received with reverence. From Florence in particular, which he flatteringly styled the daughter of ancient Rome, he demanded and instantly received military aid, and his ambassadors were most honourably entertained notwithstanding, as we are told by Villani, that wise and discreet persons pronounced the tribune's enterprise to be a fantastic proceeding that would never last.

Rienzo's vanity augmented daily, until at last causing himself to be dubbed a knight, he with vast ostentation and expense finished by bathing in the great porphyry sarcophagus where the emperor Constantine was supposed to have received his baptism: he also affected to write with a pen of fine silver, declaring that his office was too noble for its holder to use a common quill. Louis of Bavaria, Charles of Bohemia, and the imperial electors, were theatrically summoned to appear before the majesty of Rome and show their reasons for pretending to dispose of the empire; and even Clement VI. and the whole sacred college were as is said also cited to return: but here the apostolic vicar, hitherto his steady supporter, protested against any such interference with pontifical power, while Rienzo careless of consequences declared that all he did

was dictated by the Holy Spirit, and even styled himself a candidate for that inexplicable mystery.

The powerful Colonnesi, the Savelli, and Orsini could ill brook this upstart's sovereignty, and therefore secretly banding together attempted to enter Rome with a strong force; but Rienzo assembled the citizens and completely routed them, killing a Stefano, a Giovanni, and a Pietro Colonna besides many other nobles and their followers. The tribune's head was not strong enough to support all this; he multiplied ceremonies, indulged in vain pomps, walked in fanciful processions, was clothed in gorgeous attire, carried globes and crowns; and in short acted all the romance, and exhibited all the scenery of antiquity in a manner quite unworthy of his original character and the gravity of his office. He in fact loved these pomps more than the people did whom he thought to dazzle; and instead of standing alone, and simple, and severe, to tell his own story, like one of the columns of his native city, he was soon lost in the empty splendours of modern royalty.

Exhausting the national treasure; served by the great alone; his wife and kinsmen similarly honoured; allying himself by his sister's marriage with the unpopular nobility; and afterwards making his son, in allusion to his success, assume the title of "*Messer Lorenzo della Vittoria;*" the once honoured tribune began to decline in public estimation. He had contrived to get old Stefano Colonna and the principal Roman barons within his power but treated them honourably; once at a dinner given to them, that ancient chief, while discussing the question of whether it were better for a state that its rulers should be prodigal or avaricious, took hold of Rienzo's richly-embroidered mantle and said; "*For thee Tribune, it would be better methinks to wear more humble attire and not to dress thyself in these pompous ornaments.*" Cola stung by the sarcasm instantly quitted the table and ordered all the assembled nobles to be arrested on pretence, true or false, of a conspiracy

to assassinate him, and public preparations were next day made for their decapitation; but whether Cola really intended to execute them or only to strike terror by the performance of a solemn farce seems now uncertain. That his charge of conspiracy was just, is asserted by several writers, and it is also said that Rienzo had positively determined to put all the barons to death at one blow, but becoming aware of the great public excitement and compassion that would arise at the sight of so many illustrious victims he was alarmed for himself and making a virtue of necessity forgave them all: they were pardoned on the scaffold, and after riding with the tribune through Rome and being presented with rich apparel were appointed to various state offices, in order to efface every suspicion and verify the pardon *.

This apparently capricious display of authority was universally blamed: "a flame," it was said, "had been lighted that would not be easily extinguished," and the consequences soon became manifest: if these gentlemen had been really guilty they now had an opportunity of proceeding more confidently to their work; if not, false mercy after real injustice was only mockery. They indignantly retired from Rome, revolted from the tribune's authority; roused up their vassals; occupied Nepi, and Palestrina; and plundered all the country up to the gates of Rome.

On this occasion Rienzo showed no resolution, no military talent, none of the ancient working spirit; after much delay he marched against the seditious nobles but accomplished nothing; Colonna bearded him under the very walls; a gate was opened and some irregular skirmishing ensued; young Colonna boldly entered alone, was attacked and killed, old Stefano endeavoured to rescue him but also fell, and the tribune ostentatiously boasted of victory. There was yet more

* Vita di Rienzo, cap. xxviii.—Scritta da incerto Autore nel Secolo xiv. (*Forlì*, 1828.)

danger within, where a certain Neapolitan Count Minorbino occupied a house of the Colonna; he was an exile and had sought shelter in Rome where his disorderly conduct drew down the anger of Cola; being ordered to retire he refused, and having barricaded his position was attacked by a detachment of cavalry. The bells sounded, but the people were careless, languid, indifferent; Minorbino was countenanced by the pope's legate; the favour of Cola had declined, and his orders and eloquence were now alike unheeded. At length being convinced that all his moral influence had passed away and his power evaporated, Cola di Rienzo after seven months' reign resigned his ensigns of office on the seventeenth of December 1347 and retired to the castle of Saint Angelo; the city gates were opened, the exiled barons returned, and Rome soon relapsed into a worse state of anarchy than before *.

For more than thirty years the heavy chain of misfortune had been falling, link after link, on the devoted city of Florence: wars, sickness, poverty, famines, floods, fires, and sanguinary revolutions, had successively tried the spirit of her sons; yet so great was its elasticity that they still rose superior, and still held on their wonted course of national enterprise. It was hoped that misfortune had at length exhausted her quiver, when they were again stricken in common with all the world by her most deadly shaft, the great and desolating plague of 1348.

This dreadful visitation, which began in the far east and rolled dismally over the western world, pressed with unwonted weight upon Florence where the people were predisposed for disease by a succession of events that both morally and physically had affected the whole community. As far back as the year 1345 unusual and constant rains A.D. 1348.

* Vita di Cola di Rienzo.—Gio. Villani, Lib. xii., cap. xc—cv.—Muratori, Annali, An. 1347.—Sismondi, vol. iv., cap. xxxvii.—Petrarca's Letter to Cola. *Vide* De Sade, vol. ii., Lib. iii., p. 336.

accompanied and followed by earthquakes continued from the end of July to the beginning of November; the harvests were nearly ruined; but few grapes appeared; tillage was interrupted, and the little wine that could be made had proved unwholesome.

The Arno again swamped half Florence; streams, swelled into torrents, rolled over banks and bridges and ravaged every district: Rifredi and Borghetto were ruined by the Terzolla; the Mugnone and Rimaggio did equal mischief, and an overwhelming flood was hourly expected in the capital *.

The next year's harvest failed, and the rain still poured down through April, May, and June 1346, with storms and tempests, and a partial destruction of the smaller seeds: misfortune seemed busily brooding, but not for Florence alone; France and the rest of Italy were struck with equal apprehensions; corn and wine again failed; the poultry perished for lack of food; cattle of every kind were fearfully diminished; the price of oil became enormous, and fruit was almost entirely extinct: land produced at the utmost a quarter, and in some places only a sixth of the customary crops, and even that was unwholesome: want came like an armed man; the peasants abandoned their farms and robbed from each other through sheer necessity; or else begged their bread in Florence where the concourse of starving wretches was overwhelming.

No land could be tilled unless the owner provided sustenance in kind for his labourers besides the necessary seed, and this was almost impossible even at an enormous cost: in former scarcities corn was extravagantly dear but still to be had; now there was scarcely any even for the highest offers until the government with infinite exertion and by mere dint of money, imported it from the Maremma Romagna Sicily Sardinia Calabria Barbary Tunis, and the Archipelago. But even the

* Gio. Villani, Lib. xii., cap. 1.

receipt of this was difficult; for Pisa equally distressed, detained all that entered Porto Pisano until her own market was supplied. Thirty thousand florins were nominally thus spent, one third of which was supposed to have found its way into the coffers of dishonest and heartless peculators. Ten great ovens were erected by the government and strongly barricaded where by day and night men and women were constantly employed in making bread: this was distributed every morning at the sound of the great bell, to churches, convents, country parishes, and hungry creatures; but with exceeding difficulty, from the fierce pressure of starving multitudes. In April 1347 it was found by the bread-tickets received that no less than ninety-four thousand people were daily furnished with two loaves each from these ovens. In this were not counted the citizens and their households who were already supplied and did not share in the public distribution, but bought better bread at more than double price from the numerousprivate ovens. It was exclusive also of religious mendicants and other systematic beggars who in infinite numbers crowded into Florence from the adjacent towns and districts, and were in continual altercation with the citizens. Yet none were refused whether stranger or subject, and all classes joined hand and heart in relieving the general misery. The increase of grain from the wheat harvest of 1347 reduced the price, towards the end of June, which however soon mounted up again from the eagerness of bakers to purchase, in order to uphold the market by refusing to make more than a certain quantity. This plunged the city into confusion; tumults began, which the priors calmed by hanging the baker who commenced this system and corn fell to its natural value which the harvest gradually diminished *.

Death and sickness of course attended this suffering, and to alleviate the general distress the priors as early as March had

* Gio. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. lxxxiii.

decreed that nobody should be arrested for any debt under 100 golden florins until the following August; and also, with a premium for importation, put a maximum price on the bushel of wheat; this was useless; because hunger backed by money overcame law, and corn sold for double the government value. For further alleviation all the prisoners in the public jails were released on a compromise with their creditors and enemies, as mortality had already begun in these places to the number of two or three in a day; public debtors for less than 100 florins were also set at liberty on paying fifteen per cent. of their fines; but very few could take advantage of this, for all were suffering from poverty hunger and distress *.

The effects now began to appear; women and children of the poorest classes sank under the woeful pressure; this lasted until November and carried off about four thousand souls; but it was worse in Prato Pistoia and Bologna, in Romagna, and throughout all France. In Turkey, Syria, Tartary and India, sickness raged with unheard-of violence, giving rise and currency to a thousand marvellous tales, such as fire issuing from the earth and air, and consuming men, cattle, houses, trees, and even reducing the very earth and stones to cinders: those who escaped this, died of pestilence; and on the banks of the Tanais, at Trebizonde, and in all the neighbouring countries, only one person in five was left among the living: in other places it is said to have rained great black maggots with eight legs; some alive, some dead; whose sting was death and whose corruption poisoned the atmosphere; but these are the least incredible of the numerous fables that this universal scourge generated in morbid imaginations, and in which all men, being terror-struck, believed implicitly. Turkey, Greece, Egypt, Syria, Crete, Rhodes, and the other eastern isles bowed before the pestilence; thence it travelled with the course of trade to Sicily, Sardinia, Elba, Corsica, and throughout the coasts of

* Gio. Villani, Lib. xii., cap. lxxxiii.

Italy: four Genoese galleys carried it to that city out of eight that had fled from the Euxine; Milan scarcely felt it, but as there were then no lazarettos it swept over the Alps, searched every vale in Savoy, ravaged Provence and Dauphiné, infected Burgundy and Catalonia; missed Brabant, but holding on its course carried death and misery through the rest of Europe until 1350, when it had penetrated even the Boreal regions and nearly depopulated Iceland, which has never yet recovered from its touch.

"The disease," says Giovanni Villani, "was of such a nature that none survived its attack for three days: certain tumours appeared in the groins and under the arms; the patient then spit blood; and the priest that confessed him, and the neighbour who looked on him often took the malady, so that every sick creature was abandoned: no confession, no sacrament, no medicine, no attendance; yet the pope granted a pardon to every priest who administered the holy communion or confessed, or visited and watched the dying man" *.

This was in 1347, and solemn processions and offerings were made for three days together to avert the pestilence from Florence: in December the price of bread again augmented, because Romagna had absorbed every bushel of grain from the Mugello district; Venice was empty and in want; Louis of Hungary's invasion of Puglia together with pestilence on the coast, prevented her customary supplies from Sicily and Southern Italy.

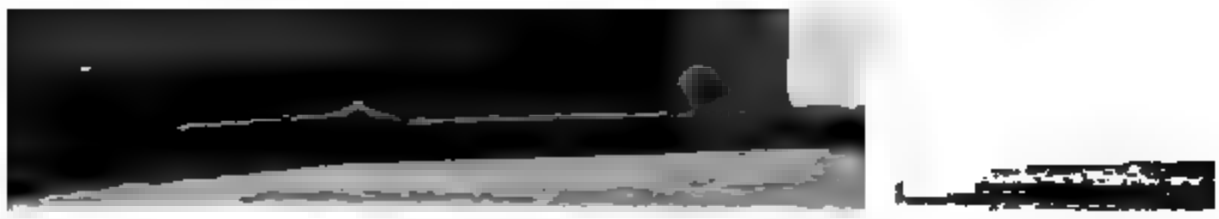
Guards were placed round the Florentine state and grain once more purchased, so that the year 1348 came in with fear and hope, but some diminution of misery: all these sufferings had painfully prepared a way for heavier calamities, and they struck with killing force on a sickly, weak, and desponding people.

Whether the great plague of 1348 fell with more fatal effects

* Gio. Villani, Lib. xii., cap. lxxxiv.—Matteo Villani, Lib. i., cap. ii.

on Florence than other places may be doubtful; yet the descriptive pen of Boccaccio, who adopts it as an introduction to his brilliant but indecent novels, has thrown a pall of immortality over this scene of universal desolation and of death.

"The year of our Lord's incarnation 1348, had already come," says this author, "when in the noble city of Florence lovely beyond all others of Italy, appeared the mortal pestilence which by the operation of superior bodies or from wicked deeds, was by the just judgment of God for our correction let loose on mortals. It began some years before in the eastern countries and after having deprived them of an inconceivable mass of living beings rolled westward in a continued course from realm to realm with mournful augmentation. Human wisdom and human prudence availed not, for the city had already been cleansed of its impurities by officers especially appointed; entrance was denied to all infected persons, and every means employed to preserve the public health. Neither were humble supplications to the Almighty more successful, although made not once but repeatedly in religious processions and divers other ways by devout persons; for very early in spring the dismal signs glared horribly palpable and manifested themselves in wonderful ways: not as in the east where bleeding at the nose was a plain symptom of inevitable death; but at the beginning, both in male and female, there appeared about the groins and under the arm-pits certain tumours some of which increased to the size of a common apple, others to that of an egg; and those greater and these less, and were vulgarly called "*Gavoccioli.*" And from the two parts of the body above mentioned these deadly gavoccioli within a brief space began to sprout and swell indiscriminately in every other; and soon after this the nature of the disease began to change into black or livid spots, which in many appeared on the arms, thighs, and other places; some large and few, others small and numerous: and as the gavocciolo at first was and always



remained a certain sign of death; so also were these spots on whomsoever they appeared.

"For the cure of this malady neither the advice of medical men nor the virtues of any nostrum availed or profited; on the contrary, whether it were that the nature of the illness would not permit, or that the ignorance of doctors (of whom besides regular physicians, the number of both sexes without a particle of knowledge, was enormous) could not divine the cause and therefore could apply no remedy; not only few survived, but almost all about the third day from the appearance of these symptoms; some sooner, some later; most of them without fever or any other accident expired.

"This pestilence was the more awful, because it darted from sick to healthy persons, as fire to dry or unctuous matter when held within its reach: the evil went still further; for not only the keeping company with and speaking to infected persons struck down the healthy and inflicted mutual death, but even the simple touch of clothes or anything once handled by the sufferer seemed instantly to transmit disease and death along with it to the toucher.

"A marvellous thing will it be to hear what I am about to relate; which, if it had not been seen by the eyes of many in common with my own, I would hardly have dared even to credit much less record although the story might have come from those most worthy of belief. I say then that so efficient was the nature of this malady in transferring itself from one to another that not only man to man, but what is still more strange, as it often happened, that the clothes of those who had been ill or died of the plague, on being touched by any inferior animal not only infected it but within a brief space destroyed existence! And this I one day witnessed with my own eyes as I have above declared.

"The clothes of a poor man who had died of plague having been thrown on the highway, two hogs approached, and accord-

ing to the custom of those animals first turned them over and over with the snout and then taking them up shook the rags about their own cheeks; but in a short time, and after some contortions as if they had been poisoned; both fell dead upon the infected heap!

"These things and many others like them or even more wonderful, generated fears and fantasies in those that remained alive, but almost all tending to the cruel resolution of flying from the sick and all belonging to them; because in doing so all of them believed that they were securing their own safety.

"There were some who fancied that to live moderately and avoid every excess would be most efficacious in resisting contagion, and so having formed their society they shrank from all others by shutting themselves up in those houses where no sickness as yet existed; to live better they eat the most delicate food and drank the finest wines, but in great moderation, holding no intercourse with the outward world, nor permitting tales of death or sickness to reach their ears; but with music and every other diversion that their means afforded they continued to dwell in seclusion.

"Others of a contrary opinion affirmed that drinking deep, and enjoyments, and singing, and rambling about for amusement, and satisfying every appetite, and mocking and ridiculing everything, was a sovereign antidote to all existing evil: and as they said so they did: for night and day, now at one tavern now at another, onward they went; drinking without mode or measure, but mostly at other people's houses, whatever pleased and delighted them: and this was easily done, for almost all as if they had deserted life, abandoned the care of themselves and everything they possessed; wherefore most dwellings remained open to the world at large, and the stranger that entered used them as if he were the lawful owner: but with all this brutish sensuality they still kept aloof from the sick.

"And in such affliction and misery was also the revered

authority of our laws both divine and human, that deserted by their ministers, they had fallen to ruin and dissolution: for these like the rest were either sick or dead; or if any remnants existed they were useless; wherefore all persons were left to their own imaginings.

"Many other people took a middle course between these two, neither restricting themselves in their food like the former, nor running to excess in drinking and dissipation like the latter; but made use of things moderately according to their wants; and instead of shutting themselves up they rambled about the town; some with bunches of flowers, some with odoriferous herbs, and others with fragrant mixtures of spices which they carried in their hands and continually applied to the nostrils, esteeming it an excellent thing to comfort the brain by their perfume because the air was loaded and disgusting with the stench of death, disease, and offensive medicaments.

"Some again entertained more unfeeling sentiments (as if they were haply more secure), declaring that there was no better, nor even so good a remedy for the plague as to fly before it; so, moved by this argument and caring only for themselves, numbers of both sexes abandoned their native city their homes their friendly meetings, their dearest relatives and all their property, and sought those of the stranger; or else retired to the seclusion of their own country dwellings: as if the anger of God, being once moved thus to punish human wickedness, would spare the rod to them and strike only those inclosed within the walls; or, as if they counselled every one to fly because the final hour of Florence was arrived.

"And although of those who held these various sentiments all did not die, yet neither did all escape; nay, many of each fell sick, but after their own example while in health, were almost everywhere deserted and left alone to suffer.

"But to say nothing of one citizen shunning another; of

neighbours disregarding their friends; or of near relations but rarely giving mutual assistance, and then only fearfully and distantly; this tribulation had inspired so deep a terror in the breast of man and woman, that brother abandoned brother, uncles their nephews, sisters their brothers; often even the wife her husband; but what is still worse and scarcely credible; both fathers and mothers fled from their own children as if they were aliens, and refused either to visit or attend them! Wherefore it followed that for them that sickened, of whom there were multitudes of each sex, no other help remained than the charity of friends (and these were rare) or the avarice of servants who attended for enormous wages and extravagant allowances; but even of these, few could be had; most of them were persons of coarse habits and many totally unaccustomed to such services, useful in nothing except to give what the patients demanded or watch until they died; and in such service they often lost both themselves and their gains.

"From this desertion of the sick by parents friends and neighbours together with the want of attendants, arose a custom which before was scarcely heard of; namely, that no woman however charming beautiful or high in rank, when once infected cared about being attended by one of the other sex whoever or whatever he might be, or young or old; and to him without any shame would expose every part of her person as if to a female whenever the malady required it, and which for those who survived became the source of diminished modesty in after times.

"Many died that haply might have lived by timely aid: so that between a want of that assistance which sufferers could not procure, and the malignant nature of this disease, the multitudes of those who daily and nightly expired in Florence would be terrible to hear, even without beholding; wherefore almost of necessity, things contrary to all former habits were engendered amongst the surviving citizens.

"It was a custom; and we still see it maintained; that in cases of death every female relation and neighbour should assemble within the deceased's house and there weep for his loss: and before the mansion every male kinsman and nearest neighbour also assembled, with other citizens in great numbers, attended by divers of the clergy according to the dead man's quality; thence on the shoulders of his peers, with funeral pomp of torch and music the corpse was slowly borne away to that church which he had previously chosen for a sepulchre.

"But when the pestilence raged most fiercely these things almost entirely ceased and new customs superseded them; for people then died not only without such assemblies of wailing women, but passed from the world, in many instances, without even a single witness; and few were those to whom the piteous sobs and tears of relatives were in mercy conceded; but instead thereof was heard the laugh or the jest, or the convivial feast! and this custom the women in general, casting aside their sex's softness, did for their own especial advantage most quickly learn.

"There were but few whose bodies were accompanied to the church by more than ten or twelve of their neighbours; nor were even these honourable citizens, but certain grave-diggers from the lowest classes named "*Becchini*" who performed this mercenary service: they roughly shouldered the bier and moved hastily and carelessly along, not to the church which the deceased had selected, but to the nearest cemetery, led by some half dozen priests with few lights and sometimes none, who assisted by the Becchini, and not troubling themselves much about a funeral service tossed the body into any unoccupied pit that they happened to find.

"The treatment of the lower and a great portion of the middle classes was still worse, because the greater part of these being confined either by hope or poverty to their houses, thousands

daily sickened, and being destitute of assistance were allowed to die: and many there were who daily and nightly terminated their existence in the streets, and many that expired in their own houses the stench of whose carcases was the first notice of their dissolution.

"Of these and other victims all places were full, and the neighbours, not less moved by the fear of putrid bodies than by charity towards the dead, with the assistance of public porters when they were to be had, dragged the corpses into the street and left them before their several doors where especially in the morning they were to be seen in heaps by those who wandered through the tainted thoroughfares.

"Biers, or in their absence planks, were afterwards brought to remove the dead; nor did one bier carry only two or three together; many times it happened that the husband, the wife, two or three brothers, a father, or a son, were in this way tossed promiscuously upon the same conveyance; nor was it less frequent for three or four biers to join a couple of priests who were going with the holy cross, as they thought for one single citizen, and returned with six or eight and sometimes many more.

"No lights, no tears, no followers, honoured these interments; for things had come to such a pass that not more thought was wasted upon those that died than would now take place about a herd of goats: wherefore it is plain, that what the natural course of events had not been able to teach the wise, by comparatively trifling and unfrequent calamities; namely, that they should bear them with patience; the very magnitude of the evil instructed even the most simple, by making them heedless of death and misfortune.

"All consecrated ground became now insufficient for the heaps of dead that every day, and almost every hour, were borne to the several churches, more especially when it was wished to give each a separate grave according to ancient custom: great

pits were therefore excavated in every cemetery where bodies were cast by hundreds and piled like bales of merchandise in a vessel's hold with a scanty covering of earth as soon as the pit was full.

"But in order not to go seeking out every particular incident of by-gone misery inflicted on our city, I say that notwithstanding its heavy calamities the surrounding country was not a whit more spared; for independent of towns, (which suffered like Florence in proportion to their size) amongst the villages and scattered population, the miserable peasantry without care or comfort medicine or attendance, in the roads, and fields, and houses, by day and night; not like men but beasts, sank down and hopelessly expired: wherefore they, like the citizens, became loose and lascivious, and prodigal and reckless of everything around them; so that oxen, asses, sheep, goats, hogs, fowls, and the very dogs themselves, faithful as they are to man, wandered from their homes and strayed as they pleased through field and meadow where the untouched harvest still grew and ripened in the midst of universal desolation. And many of these creatures as if endowed with reason, after having pastured all the day returned at eve to the stall in all their fullness without hearing the accustomed voice of their pastor.

"But leaving the country and returning to the city; what more can be told except that so great and terrible was the wrath of Heaven, and perhaps in part the cruelty of man, that between March and the following July, what with the force of this pestiferous malady and the want of common attention proceeding as it did from the fears of the healthy; more than one hundred thousand human beings as is certainly believed, were torn from life within the walls of Florence, where previous to this deadly visitation it would have been scarcely supposed that so great a population existed. Oh! how many gorgeous palaces! how many noble houses! how many superb mansions! so recently filled with numerous families, of lords and ladies,

now stood empty even to the lowest drudge of the household! Oh how many illustrious races! how many ample inheritances! how many splendid fortunes now remained without a rightful owner! How many valorous gentlemen! how many lovely women! how many aspiring youths (whom even Galen Hippocrates or Esculapius himself would almost have pronounced immortal) dined in the morning with their families their friends and their neighbours, and the following evening supped in Hades with their ancestors *!"

Such is the vivid picture drawn by Boccaccio! But while contemplating this awful image of human misery, we seek in vain for one bright figure to relieve the general gloom! Not a touch of benevolence, self-devotion, or sensibility, anywhere appears! no friendship, no love, no virtuous or heroic act; no picture of domestic affection; not a trait of charity; not a touch of human sympathy is displayed! Nothing bright or beneficent breaks on the dismal scene, nor is there a single group in the whole composition to relieve the broad mass of heartless suffering or vindicate the feeling and dignity of man! All is dark, earthly, selfish: none of that religion that overcomes peril, of that perfect love that braves it; nothing to show that man also may exercise heavenly benevolence and rise superior to danger and misery and death!

Yet amidst the vast population of Florence there must have been many who touched by the hand of love and charity appeared like beneficent spirits to alleviate the sufferings of their fellow-creatures, for such beings are never totally extinct: pity it is that the historian's pen has not transmitted their names and their actions to posterity!

In this wide and wasting pestilence all Europe was more or less immersed: she was bereft of three-fifths of her population; and excepting Milan together with a few places at the foot of the Alps, the whole of Italy was shaken to its centre. Genoa

* Gio. Boccaccio, Introduzione del Decameron.

lost forty thousand, Naples sixty; and Sicily and Puglia the incredible number of five hundred and thirty thousand souls! The city of Trapani was completely depopulated; *all* died; and her silent walls and empty dwellings were alone left to tell the tale. Throughout Tuscany the harvest of death was proportionably great: Pisa lost four-fifths or as some say seven-tenths; Florence three-fifths; but Siena mourned for eighty thousand of her buried citizens and never recovered from the blow*.

Amongst the illustrious victims of this universal sacrifice were the celebrated Laura of Avignon and the historian Giovanni Villani of Florence: the latter says Sismondi (and his words will suit all subsequent, as they are the echo of antecedent writers) "was the most expert, faithful, elegant and animated historian that Italy had yet produced: we have made habitual use of his history during more than half a century with that confidence that is due to a judicious cotemporary author who had himself taken part in public affairs." Villani was in fact much more than a mere historian, and like almost all Florentines became both merchant and politician; he travelled into France and the Netherlands, was several times in the Seignory, superintended the building of the present walls, directed the mint, and filled other high offices in the commonwealth. He served also against Castruccio, was one of the hostages delivered to Mastino della Scala, and spent a long life in public and private activity; but finally ruined by the failure of the Bonaccorsi with whom he was in partnership, his latter days were apparently unhappy and he died amidst the misfortunes of his country†.

* R. Roncioni, Ist. Pis., Lib. xii., p. 807. — R. Sardo., Cron. Pisa, cap. lxxxii. — S. Ammirato, Lib. x., p. 505. — Matteo Villani, Lib. i., cap. i., &c.

† His Chronicle remained for nearly two centuries unpublished, but at last came to light under the care of Zannetti of Venice, in 1537—wanting the two last books, and full of errors; after which other editions rapidly followed in 1554, 1559, and 1587, &c.

Sickness gave way before the August sun, and all that remained of the Florentine people were free from disease at the new Seignory's inauguration on the first of September, but what the remnant was we are not told; so small however that poverty disappeared, and riches abounded in consequence of accumulated inheritances. Yet instead, as some expected, of men's hearts being softened and subdued and penitent, and turned to religion and virtue and moderation by so awful a catastrophe Florence immediately became a theatre of luxury riot and debauchery! As if the hand of God were tired, and death was swallowed up in victory. Feasting, taverns, and every kind of licentious revel occupied the people; both sexes high and low, with new and fanciful attire; but more especially the latter, flaunted through the streets bedizened like players in the rich garments of illustrious families, all now extirpated! And as if these saturnalia were to be everlasting, few labourers would return to agriculture, fewer still to trade; and those few insisted on exorbitant remuneration. Unbounded pride and heartless prodigality were everywhere triumphant: the hand of death had removed the burden of poverty; the departure of death had removed the weight of terror, and the rebound was startling! With feelings numbed and passions free, no wish was too vicious to indulge, no idea too strange for belief. Superabundance of agricultural produce was ignorantly looked for in consequence of the scarcity of mouths, and the contrary happened; for everything fell short and long continued so; in some countries even to the most biting famine: manufactures of almost all kinds, clothes, everything necessary for the human body, were in like manner expected to appear spontaneously and in profusion; but the reverse took place; most sorts of manufactured goods soon doubled their former cost, and all labour brought twice the money that it fetched before the pestilence: disputes, lawsuits, contests; disturbances of every class sprouted like nettles throughout the land, and Florence long

and severely felt their evil consequences. Immense treasures too had been willed away by dying men to public charities, or in trust to corporate bodies for the poor; some directly, others after several successions, all now swept off by exterminating plague: amongst others there was left to the corporation of Orto-san-Michele alone, the vast inheritance of 350,000 florins, a sum equal to one year's revenue of the commonwealth! This was in trust for the poor: but there were no poor: no paupers: no destitution; death had murdered poverty! Money, houses, and other valuables abounded; the directors felt their hands at liberty, their conscience easy; and unbounded peculation was the result: the elections were kept close amongst themselves; they reëlected each other; power and profit moved round in a circle undisturbed by any external influence for three long years, until at last the angry voice of Florence destroyed this nefarious and disgraceful system. In a similar manner but with better management 25,000 florins were left to the hospital of Santa Maria Nuova, and an equal sum to the new and useful company of "Misericordia;" so that the city most abounded in charitable resources at the very time when poverty was for the moment annihilated.

Many corrective laws for the various existing evils were promulgated by those magistrates who still retained their discretion and now resumed their power: one of these was to exonerate minors and married women from any legal responsibility in affairs of pecuniary and other property, unless with the consent of their relations or guardians declared before a judge in the court of the above corporation of Orto-san-Michele, which had *ex-officio* their guardianship. At the same period and no less to encourage population by the residence of students than for the dignity of Florence, a public college was founded for the first time, and able professors appointed to the whole range of science, besides civil and canon law, and dogmatic theology*.

* Filippo Villani, Lib. i., cap. vii., viii.

It might have been supposed that all accounts between debtor and creditor had been cancelled by the plague; but so many fraudulent bankruptcies had previously occurred and so unwholesome a system of mercantile credits had been allowed that it became an article of swindling speculation, and large orders were frequently given on long credit with the sole view to future insolvency. As a remedy there was now published a decree forbidding any citizen to buy or sell on credit, not only in the state itself but within a hundred miles of Florence, on pain of losing his reputation and a fine equal to the amount of the purchase-money. Nor were sumptuary laws forgotten; for riches and luxury required control, and a check was therefore placed on the expense of marriage ceremonies which now were frequent in consequence of augmented wealth and thin population: but as these could not at once raise citizens to the state new scrutiny-lists became requisite for three years which from necessity admitted the nobles to many public offices both in town and country.

These matters being once settled it was hoped that the city would gradually subside into the ordinary quiet and occupations of common life; when suddenly the Ubaldini, trusting to their strong Alpine fastnesses, began to assemble numerous bands of rebels and outlaws and make inroads on the province of Mugello; so that after some vain attempts at peace a body of troops was marched against them and a war commenced with this restless and powerful clan which in her actual weakness became extremely troublesome to Florence*.

COTEMPORARY MONARCHS.—No changes since 1343.

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* Ammirato, Lib. x., p. 509.— M. Villani, Lib. i., cap. xxiii.—xlv.

CHAPTER XXII.

FROM A.D. 1349 TO A.D. 1354.

ALTHOUGH the Ubaldini were no match for Florence even in her present weakness yet their numerous clansmen, armed, warlike, and aggressive; and their many fastnesses, resting like eagles' nests on the crags and passes of the Apennine, secured to them all those advantages usually enjoyed by mountaineers from the power of making sudden descents on their lowland neighbours: the castigation already inflicted was too slight to check their sweeping incursions as long as they possessed these strongholds, and a board of eight citizens was consequently appointed to conduct this mountain war. The priors were moreover instructed to make at least one yearly invasion of their country under the penalty of 1000 florins each, until these turbulent chiefs should be again reduced to submission: the whole family of Ubaldini was denounced; intermarriages between them and Florentines prohibited, and a price set upon the head of every individual of that race whether alive or dead. A.D. 1349.

In June a fresh army occupied their hills and took Montegemoli; it reduced one chief to obedience, captured Montecolloreto, Roccabruna, Lozzole, Vigiano, and other places; insulted Susinana and Valdagnello, and after considerable devastation, leaving strong garrisons in the captured places, retired about the month of August to Florence. Meanwhile Colle and San Gimignano had returned to their allegiance; a

board of sixteen citizens was created to impose new taxes and take measures for repeopling the city; a league was formed with Siena Perugia and Bologna against a new company of freebooters then organising in Puglia under the terrible and notorious Werner; the pay of Florentine soldiers was augmented to meet the scarcity caused by pestilence and the year 1349 finished in comparative tranquillity.

But while these things were passing in Tuscany the kingdom of Naples was vexed throughout. In 1347 king Louis of Hungary had sent ambassadors to prepare his way by conciliating the different states and princes of Italy; and about the same time his rival, queen Giovanna, married her cousin Louis of Taranto, to the great scandal of all good Christians; for in that day such unions were considered little better than incestuous.

A.D 1350. The pope was less scrupulous, more especially as he had no mind to see a powerful Hungarian monarch establish himself in the realm of Naples; he therefore favoured Giovanna; particularly as the pontifical residence was within her hereditary possessions and the city of Avignon her own property. Meanwhile the Hungarian emissaries were far more active, and finally succeeded in making the city of Aquila revolt: this town although only founded by Frederic II. had already risen to great power and importance and its defection was a severe blow to the court of Naples which was then in its wonted state of discord: the royal princes were all at variance and only by prayers promises and excited hopes, could the queen prevail on Charles of Durazzo to march against the rebels. During the siege a Hungarian prelate accompanied by two hundred knights well furnished with arms and money descended the Alps and began to levy forces in Romagna and La Marca: with the help of the lords of Rimini and Foligno besides other troops raised in the Abruzzi, they soon assembled a body of two thousand men and marched directly on Aquila. Durazzo might easily have opposed them, but disgusted with the queen's marriage which

occurred about the same time, he indignantly raised the siege and returned to Naples while the grand Hungarian army crossed the Alps and advanced on Puglia. At Foligno the pope's legate arrested the royal progress and interdicted any forward movement under pain of excommunication: heedless of this, king Louis continued his march to Aquila and began hostilities with six thousand men-at-arms and a numerous infantry; but Naples ever too much distracted to be a difficult conquest was now at his feet; the discontented barons joined him at Benevento and all marched in a body on the capital.

Giovanna fled in alarm, took to her galleys and sought refuge in Provence; her husband followed soon after, and accompanied by his faithful minister Acciaioli whose influence supplied his necessities, rejoined her at Avignon*. In the meanwhile king Louis advanced to Aversa the scene of his brother's murder, but was not joined by any of the Reali who distrusting him, at first kept aloof; afterwards on receiving solemn assurances of their personal safety they ventured to court, were received with distinction and honourably treated; they even dined in the royal presence and experienced every outward mark of genuine hospitality.

After the banquet Louis expressed a wish to see the room in which his brother Andrea had been assassinated; this was an alarming declaration for his guests who were all suspected of being well-wishers to the success of that abominable murder if not actual accomplices: it was however too late to retreat; they were in the king's power and followed him trembling: on arriving at the fatal spot Louis turned suddenly on Durazzo

* Niccòla Acciaioli Grand Seneschal of Naples was a friend of Petrarch's and of a high Florentine family; but he attached himself to the fortunes of Robert and Joanna of Naples. After acquiring great fame riches and dignities, he died in 1365 and was buried with great honours in the Certosa Convent near Florence which he had founded. Petrarch was latterly displeased with him for not keeping a promise; for which act Acciaioli is sharply reproached by that poet.

and with a withering look accused him of being accessory to the deed. The duke's guilt was doubtful, but his fate certain: he in vain protested his innocence and begged for mercy; at a sign from the prince a dozen Hungarian daggers were planted in his breast and he fell on the very spot which had so lately been polluted by the murder of the unfortunate Andrea. Head and body were soon separated, and to complete the revenge both were ignominiously tossed from the same balcony on to the same tuft of grass where the strangled corpse of Giovanna's husband had been found by his attendants.

This was the only death; the other princes were sent prisoners to Hungary and Louis entered Naples as a conqueror quietly mounting a throne acquired without a blow, but which he did not find it quite so easy to retain. Alarmed at the plague he after four months of severe if not cruel administration suddenly disbanded the greater part of his troops and retired into Hungary leaving the unsteady people with an almost universal wish for the restoration of their queen. Louis of Tarento who had been sedulously strengthening his party at Avignon, was eager to avail himself of the Hungarian's absence and this change of public opinion, but being destitute of money he sold that city to Clement VI. for 30,000 florins and the title of King of Naples. This supply enabled him to equip ten galleys and engage Duke Werner, who had been just dismissed from the Hungarian service, with a company of twelve hundred men as his general. Niccola Acciaioli had returned early to Naples and was indefatigable; principally through his management the king and queen were enabled by the month of August 1348 to shape their course towards the capital and resume the government although the metropolitan castles and most of the national fortresses were still in the hands of staunch Hungarian garrisons *.

* M. Villani, Lib. i., cap. ix. to xxi. —Costanzo, Istor. di Napoli, vol. ii., Lib. vi., p. 357 to 377.—Giannone, Istoria Civile di Napoli, vol. x., Lib. xxiii., p. 149, et seq.

The notorious Werner was a Condottiere of far too much importance not to receive the highest honours from Louis and Giovanna; indeed so necessary was he at this moment that the former to secure his fidelity disgraced himself by receiving the rank of knighthood at his hands yet failed in attaching this robber to his service.

After having been dismissed by the Hungarian early in 1348 Werner had resumed his wonted course of plunder, sacked all those towns in the Roman Campagna which were spirited enough to refuse him tribute, and massacred without mercy or distinction the whole population of Anagni for having presumed to defend themselves against his licentious soldiery.

Although there are examples of similar abominations previous to the time of Werner yet he has been generally considered the first as he certainly was one of the most mischievous of those condottieri that so long devoured the substance of Italy: finding that he could not indulge his predacious habits under the government of Louis he passed treacherously over to Currado Lupo the Hungarian commander and thus enabled him to advance on the capital, near which at a place called Melito the Neapolitan barons were completely discomfited on the sixth of June 1349 in an irregular battle, with little bloodshed but many prisoners.

This success gave Lupo military command of the whole open country; cities and towns were forced to ransom the surrounding harvest with enormous sums, and the mischief rose to such a height that Pope Clement was compelled to interfere and at last succeeded in establishing a truce between the belligerents *.

After this, Duke Werner entered the service of Francesco Ordelaffi of Forlì, for Romagna was also in confusion and the lordship of Bologna had passed to the sons of Taddeo Peppoli deceased in 1347.

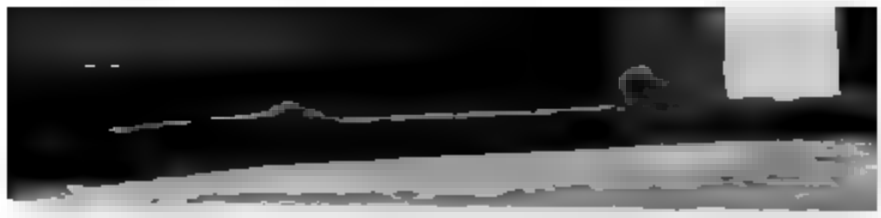
* M. Villani, Lib. i., cap. xlvii. to l.—Costanzo, Istor. di Napoli, Lib. vi., p. 277.

Cola di Rienzo had already escaped in disguise from the castle of Sant Angelo and appeared almost as a mendicant at the imperial court of Charles IV. who after listening a while to his propositions delivered him into the hands of Clement VI. at Avignon where he long remained a prisoner.

In Pisa about the same period (1347) two powerful factions arose and filled that city with fresh dissensions: the young Count Reniero della Gherardesca had succeeded to all the power and public honours of his family; from childhood he had been captain-general of the republic, an office which during his minority was administered by his kinsman Dino della Rocca and the chiefs of the popular party; but as manhood approached the adverse faction gradually managed to supplant them in the young chieftain's confidence. The leader of these new counsellors, who from the nick-name of "*Bergo*" (a weak soft person) given to the young count, were called "*Bergolini*," was Andrea Gambacorta. The other faction were extremely reluctant to divest themselves of a long hold of office, the source of power and profit, although their administration had not been entirely blameless or undisturbed: they had been frequently accused of dishonesty and had in consequence received the significant appellation of "*Raspanti*" or peculators, and thus were the two parties distinguished. A violent spirit was fast rising when Reniero suddenly died and the Raspanti were instantly accused of poisoning him: this pushed both parties to extremes and after a hard struggle the latter were driven from Pisa on the twenty-fourth of December 1347, Andrea Gambacorta with the Bergolini remaining lords of the commonwealth; and thus commenced the power of the Gambacorti in Pisa *.

Luchino Visconti, whose policy was always to support that party from which he could gain most and most easily cast off

* Mem. Istor. di più Uomini Illust. Pisani, tomo, ii", p. 339, and annotations. — Cronaca di Pisa, Scrip. R., Ital., vol. xiv., p. 1017-18. — Roncioni, Ist. Pisa, Lib. xiv., p. 803. — Gio. Villani, Lib. xii., cap. cxx. — Tronci, Annali. — Muratori, Annali. — Sismondi, vol. iv.



when done with, assisted the Doria, Grimaldi, and other Genoese exiles in 1348, and would perhaps have acquired the lordship of that city if death had not claimed him in the following January. In this spirit he had already quarrelled with Filippino Gonzaga of Mantua because the latter refused to give up certain places that he demanded, and at once declared war against that ruler: Mastino della Scala and Obizzo of Este united with Luchino, but the Mantuan prince hurried back from Naples where he had followed the king of Hungary and hastily assembling a few soldiers surprised and defeated the Milanese army before its junction with the allies while he forced the latter to a precipitate retreat. But death luckily cut short Luchino's ambition which had grown formidable to his neighbours, and Giovanni Visconti Archbishop of Milan, a man of somewhat milder nature, succeeded to the sovereignty which he had hitherto nominally shared with his deceased brother.

The union of spiritual and temporal power gave unwonted energy to Giovanni's government: Bernabò and Galeazzo Visconti were immediately recalled from an exile to which the jealousy of their late uncle had condemned them, and even Lodovisi son of Stefano was released by his cousin from a long imprisonment which he had endured since the days of Azzo. One of Giovanni's first acts was to make peace with Mantua, but Mastino prosecuted the war alone, and Romagna continued in its accustomed state of dissension from the violent conduct of Malatesta di Rimini.

Sicily also was shaken by two powerful factions both of which gained strength from the minority of King Louis after death had removed the steady hand of his uncle and guardian William. Rome also continued in its usual state of confusion and half obedience to ecclesiastical power under the rule of three senators, a Colonna, an Orsini, and the legate.

Meanwhile the actual weakness of Florence encouraged

audacity in her restless neighbours and forced her to adopt a more organised system of defence: the Ubertini became troublesome and were chastised; the national defences were strengthened and reformed; three great military divisions were created and placed under three separate officers called Vicars: one of these was stationed at Montopoli in the lower Val d'Arno; another at Monte Varchi in the upper Vale: and a third at Poggibonzi to protect the Val d'Elsa, all with sufficient troops and officers for any emergency, and totally independent of garrisons, because the Castelli and other fortresses were given in charge at less expense either to their own inhabitants or the various municipalities in whose territory they happened to be situated *.

Prato although really governed by Florence continued at this time like many other petty states to preserve a nominal independence notwithstanding that the people had in 1327 bestowed the lordship of their city on Charles Duke of Calabria. The powerful family of Guazzalotri had however acquired great influence and maintained its ascendancy with a tolerable government under the friendly auspices of Florence; but the older members of this house dying off, a young arrogant generation succeeded who assuming unearned superiority soon became unmodified tyrants. This however would not have signified (for the Italians were becoming accustomed to tyranny under the forms of liberty) had they still quietly submitted to Florentine dictation; but choosing rather to govern independently and having moreover committed several cruel actions, that republic determined to possess itself of Prato which, as a preliminary step, was forthwith purchased from Queen Giovanna for 17,500 florins and incorporated in the Contado, supreme jurisdiction in capital cases being thenceforward transferred to the metropolis. Whatever satisfaction Florence might have received from this acquisition must have been considerably

* Scip. Ammirato, Lib. x., p. 512.

modified by seeing her ancient ally the Bolognese republic fall suddenly under the power of the dreaded and too powerful Visconti. A.D. 1350.

Giovanni Archbishop of Milan, quiet under the fiercer dominion of his brother, was nevertheless a Visconti; and no sooner was he absolute lord of twenty-two cities with their vast and fruitful territory, than unchecked by ecclesiastical ties but strengthened by its power, the bold ambitious spirit of his race brake forth with redoubled and insatiate vigour: and although some meek and friendly expressions of attachment to Florence carried no present sound of war, little doubt was entertained of an ultimate desire to extend his conquests far beyond the Apennines and disturb the peace of Tuscany.

The revolution of Bologna occurred in this wise. Pope Clement VI. imitating the Mosaic law, and on the very reasonable pretence that a secular jubilee, if of any spiritual advantage, could only affect the limited number of pilgrims who happened to be in existence at the moment of its celebration, resolved to retrench the original period to one half and accordingly proclaimed a second jubilee for the year 1350. This at least was the ostensible reason; but the real object as with Boniface was Mammon; an object now realised beyond all hope and far exceeding the first experiment. The fearful pestilence which still ravaged many parts of Europe filled multitudes with a desire of plenary indulgence for past and present transgressions, and hence the treasures incessantly dropping into ecclesiastical coffers were enormous. According to Matteo Villani twelve hundred thousand pilgrims were assembled in Rome during the Lent of that memorable year: the city is described as one vast inn where all Christendom was received and fed; and the profit on provisions alone which the Romans effectively monopolised, was unmeasured and astounding. One half of those offerings that unceasingly poured into the churches belonged to themselves the other to the

pontiff; and these he had predetermined to employ in reducing all Romagna to subjection. The ecclesiastical states although long abandoned by imperial ambition had never been more than nominally under ecclesiastical rule; Romagna was partitioned amongst a set of petty tyrannical lords who preyed on each other and their country while they crushed the spirit of the people, and possessing but little individual force could when thus disunited make only a slight resistance to any powerful aggressor.

Matteo Villani tells us that Pope Clement VI. and his cardinals feeling ashamed that the church should have been so long deprived of these rich territories resolved to regain them by force of arms, and the general weakness consequent on plague and famine induced him to believe it an easy task. His relation Astorgio, or Hector de Durfort had already been created Count of Romagna, and being well furnished with men and money received instructions to bring the whole of that country under ecclesiastical rule. Assistance was separately demanded from each of the Lombard tyrants; from Bologna, and from Tuscany; the two former granted it, but all the Tuscan states declined to coöperate. Although the Count of Romagna was secretly ordered by force or cunning to subject each tyrant successively, his ostensible motive was to punish Giovanni Manfredi Lord of Faenza for having revolted from the church, expelled the papal followers, and separated from the ecclesiastical Guelphs of Italy *.

Durfort demanded and received assistance from the Peppoli, as well as from the Alidosi of Imola which city he occupied, but both were insincere and secretly favoured Manfredi for both dreaded the resumption of papal power in Romagna, and the intercourse became a mere trial of deception on all sides. The Malatesti of Rimini and Pollenti of Ravenna, too sagacious not to foresee their own ruin in the pope's triumph, openly

* M. Villani, Lib. i°, cap. liii., liv.—Sismondi, vol. iv., p. 268.

sided with Manfredi and engaged Duke Werner and his fierce companions in their cause *.

The count however, from Visconti, Mastino, Ferrara, and the Peppoli, had assembled at Imola about a thousand auxiliary horse besides his Provençal forces, and artful as the barons of Romagna themselves, exhibited an unbounded confidence in the lords of Bologna; yet more wily than warlike, he had lost two months before Salervolo instead of investing Faenza itself, and Giovanni de' Peppoli endeavoured to increase this delay by offering his own mediation in order to bring Manfredi to terms. This was accepted with apparent eagerness by the count who affected to be guided entirely by Giovanni's counsel and a negotiation actually commenced while he was secretly plotting with the malcontents of Bologna to assassinate both brothers. The treason was discovered; but still so artfully was Count Durfort's part in it concealed that he not only managed to exculpate himself completely but even to entice Giovanni Peppoli into his camp on pretence of bringing the negotiation with Manfredi to a conclusion. This step was contrary to the advice of Giacopo de' Peppoli; Giovanni was received with every external mark of honour and friendship but was startled by unexpectedly finding himself a prisoner in the count's tent who sharply accusing him of bringing Werner and his five hundred myrmidons into Faenza sent him off captive to Imola while his troops were disarmed, pillaged, and driven from the papal camp †.

Thus warned Giacopo Peppoli lost no time in seeking aid amongst his allies: Milan and Rimini sent him troops; Florence none; for she had no reason to be satisfied with the lords of Bologna but on the contrary would have been well contented to assist in displacing those tyrants had the Bolognese citizens

* M. Villani, Lib. i., cap. lviii., lix. Anno 1350. — Sismondi, vol. iv., p. 268.

† M. Villani, Lib. i°, cap. lvi., lviii, lx., lxi. — Muratori, Annali,

still retained spirit enough to seize the opportunity of recovering their freedom. Neither had she any wish to quarrel with Clement; but Visconti less scrupulous on that point sent ambassadors to remonstrate with Durfort against the detention of his ally and demand an instant release. The complaint was unheeded and Peppoli's liberty refused on the plea of his having excited Faenza to revolt, besides other convenient reasons; moreover Durfort even managed to seduce the archbishop's contingent of troops then in camp and so dismissed the embassy *. Meanwhile Duke Werner at the invitation of Jacopo Peppoli marched with his five hundred Barbute from Faenza to Bologna and although an enemy of Florence and warring against the church, threaded the mountain passes of its territory without any opposition from the priors then in office, but to the great indignation of the public. At Bologna his deportment was rather that of a master than a servant; seizing at once on a whole street for his quarters he set an example which was not lost upon the other auxiliaries, so that many of the inhabitants were expelled from their homes, the people plundered, famished, and oppressed within, while the papal army ravaged everything without †. In these circumstances Jacopo Peppoli not only agreed to deliver Bologna to the care of Florence, but even consented to abdicate in hopes of thus removing every obstacle to a reconciliation with Avignon: certain influential Florentines however who served on their own account in Durfort's army, hoping if Bologna fell to be made governors there, rendered this negotiation fruitless, threw the Bolognese into despair, and increased the Count of Romagna's audacity ‡. Thus situated the city could scarcely have stood a moment if broken promises and want of pay had not caused disappointment and mutiny amongst the papal troops and finally compelled Durfort to deliver Giovanni Peppoli into

* M. Villani, Lib i., cap. lxiii. † M. Villani, Lib. i., cap. lxv.
‡ M. Villani, Lib. i., cap. lxv., lxvii.

their hands: they paid themselves by his ransom which cost 80,000 florins*, and this fortunate restoration threw fresh spirit into the government, for he was a man of ability, a good soldier, and generally feared by the citizens†.

Nor was Giovanni's return displeasing to Florence, because that government really anxious to restore peace and if possible the popular ascendancy in Bologna, thought both of these objects would be more easily accomplished by his release and the consequent diminution of Count Durfort's power. Ambassadors were therefore sent to Bologna and the preliminaries signed, by which the church was to be made paramount; republican government reëstablished; the Peppoli were to abdicate, and the constitution to be reformed under a commission of Florentine citizens nominated by their own republic. These advantageous terms were at first accepted by the Count of Romagna but finally rejected through the intrigues of Frignano a natural son and agent of Mastino della Scala who secretly aimed at the possession of Bologna for himself.

The Peppoli were so mortified by this failure that they determined to sacrifice the independence of their country as well as their own honour on the altar of vengeance by secretly selling both to the Archbishop of Milan while they maintained an outward show of negotiation with Florence, under whose protection the citizens of Bologna were anxious to be placed. This scheme was successful and Giovanni repaired to Milan, completed the bargain for 200,000 florins, and then unblushingly returned to Bologna with an open avowal of his treachery!

The citizens were furious and the populace clamorous, but being afraid to strike, all quietly subsided into abject submission: Florence would have gladly assisted them had there been suffi-

* Corio (Historie Milanese, Parte iii[a], p. 224) says 30,000 florins of which 10,000 were paid down and this sum is probably nearer the truth.

† M. Villani, Lib. i., cap. lxvi.

cient spirit in the place to work upon; but this being wanting Galeazzo Visconti at once occupied the town, and thus a new and fertile source of war and misery was opened upon Italy*.

Gasparo Visconti assumed the command of Bologna and in the following October the Archbishop of Milan was publicly acknowledged as lord of a city that once was esteemed a province in itself, so rich and extensive were its territories and so numerous the students who flocked from all parts of Christendom to its celebrated university†. Thus finished the power of the Peppoli in Bologna, but the Guelphic factions of that city and Florence who knew and dreaded the ambition of Visconti, became seriously alarmed, and Florence herself began to tremble at the close neighbourhood of so powerful a Ghibeline‡.

A.D. 1351. Notwithstanding the exorbitant ransom of Giovanni Peppoli, of which 20,000 florins were paid down, the Count of Romagna was still in arrears, and from papal neglect unable to pay his soldiers; the consequence was a cessation of military operations against Bologna and the necessity of at last allowing them to treat with the new governor Bernabò Visconti who instantly paid up their arrears with the money destined for the purchase of that city, received in exchange all the towns and territory they had already occupied and took fifteen hundred of them into his service§. Werner who was a personal enemy of Bernabò Visconti at once retired, the siege was raised, the other auxiliaries returned home, and Count Durfort retreated in disgrace to Imola at the very moment when a judicious supply of money would have given Bologna to the church and saved the land from war||.

* M. Villani, Lib. i., cap. lxviii.

† At one period there were no less than 13,000 scholars.

‡ M. Villani, Lib. i., cap. lxviii.

§ Corio says that Bernabò with the help of Gonzaga of Mantua first fought some bloody battles with the Papal army.—(Vide Parte iii^{a}, p. 224, Historie Milanese.)

|| M. Villani, Lib. i., cap. lxxi.

Clement furious at the archbishop's success and his own discomfiture instantly renewed all the censures pronounced against him by Pope John XXII. cited him to appear within a given time at Avignon, and finally bade him make his choice of what he would henceforth be, or temporal lord or archbishop of Milan; but not both. Giovanni named a day for the solemn publication of the legate's message at the conclusion of divine service in the cathedral, and before the assembled people. On the appointed Sunday, after Archbishop Visconti had himself celebrated mass with great splendour, the legate rose, and in presence of a great multitude repeated Pope Clement's declaration. On this Visconti came slowly forward with a stern aspect, then stopped, and suddenly drawing a bright blade from his side while with the left hand he seized a crucifix, "*This cross*," said he in a loud and determined voice, "*is my spiritual, as this sword shall be my temporal authority for the protection of all my dominions*," and so dismissed the messenger.

Clement still more indignant at so public an insult renewed his former summons under pain of excommunication and Visconti declared his readiness to obey; whereupon his secretary was instantly despatched to Avignon with orders to hire every house, palace, hotel, or dwelling that he could procure, for six months; and to prepare everything necessary for the supply of twelve thousand horse and six thousand infantry. The consequence was that no stranger could find lodgings in the place and the strange news coming to Pope Clement's ears he sent for the Milanese secretary and heard that the archbishop humbly intended to obey his commands, but accompanied by these personal followers and a long train of Milanese nobles and citizens besides, all of whom wished to do honour to their chief. Clement instantly demanded how much had already been spent: the secretary replied that 40,000 florins had been disbursed in these preparations, upon which the

money was immediately repaid and Visconti received the papal dispensation for his personal appearance. Whatever truth may be in this story; the authenticity of which there however seems no reason to question; Giovanni managed his business so adroitly as sometime afterwards to receive the investiture of Bologna from Clement himself for the payment of 100,000 florins, and thus were these two churchmen reconciled*.

During the foregoing events one of the Florentine family of Antelesi who was Bishop of Ferrara had been despatched as legate to organise a Tuscan league in conjunction with some of the Lombard chieftains, against Visconti: Siena and Perugia deeming themselves too remote to fear his power especially the latter, gave but an outward adherence to this and interposed so much delay that Mastino della Scala's death in the month of June and the comparative weakness of the other Lombards put an end to the negotiation.

The miscarriage was unfortunate because its success would have effectually baffled Visconti's schemes of aggrandisement and its failure left Florence in considerable alarm, more especially when it was understood that Milanese emissaries were actively availing themselves of the distracted state of Pistoia where a small Florentine detachment had been long quartered under command of the local government. The seignory resolved therefore to occupy that place with greater forces and strengthen their own frontier in the same direction; an unsuccessful attempt was made to effect the former by a union of force and treachery, but unknown to the great body of the citizens; and although this action was outwardly and loudly blamed, the importance of the position and terror of Visconti were so great that national danger was deemed a sufficient apology for national injustice, and the fear of losing Pistoia a valid excuse for robbing an old and devoted friend. The city

* M. Villani, Lib. i., cap. lxxvi. — Corio, Hist. Milanese, Parte iii^a, vol. ccxxiv. — Muratori, Annali. — Sismondi, vol. iv., p. 276.

was vigorously besieged, both with arms and protestations; public security being alleged as the Florentines' only object, and so effectual were these means that through the mediation of Siena Pistoia agreed to receive a Florentine garrison, to allow the building of a citadel within the town, and even to surrender the strong fortresses of Serravalle and Sambuca commanding two important passes to the south-westward and north-eastward of Pistoia*. This piece of treachery was blamed by many and justified by none, except as an imperious act of self-preservation, and has been more recently imitated by ourselves, if not with equal treachery certainly with less necessity. Visconti although alarmed at the cloud that Mastino's death had dispersed, never relaxed in his outward expressions of esteem for Florence, and proffered them with more warmth because he was secretly weaving a strong web of the Tuscan, Lombard and Romagnan Ghibelines for her destruction along with all the Guelphic faction in Italy. Bernabò Visconti had married the sister of Can Grande II. the son and successor of Mastino della Scala, and this young chief was easily persuaded by Visconti to join him with all the power of Verona in common with a crowd of petty Ghibeline tyrants and states who assisted at his secret diet in Milan, for Visconti found an ally in every usurper of his country's liberty. Benedetto de' Buonconti Monaldeschi who had recently waded through blood to the lordship of Orvieto; Giovanni Gabrielli d'Agobbio who had run a similar course in that city; the Uberti, Ubaldini, Tarlati, Pazzi; the counts of Santa Fiore; the lords of Forlì, Rimini, and Urbino; Francesco Castracani; the sons of Castruccio, and even Pisa itself besides many other chiefs, all appeared either personally or by deputy at Milan whose aspiring prelate contemplated little less than the subjugation of Italy †.

* Hist. di Pistoia, M. Salvi, tom. ii., parte ii., Lib. ix.—Cronaca di Donato Velluti, p. 90, &c.—M. Villani, Lib. i., cap. xcvi., xcvii.—Poggio Braccio-lini, Ist. di Firenze, Lib. i.

† Corio, Histor. Milan., Parte iii., folio 225.—M. Villani, Lib. ii., cap. iv.

Florence was the first object of war, but though still suspicious and alarmed she remained inactive; and whether lulled by the honied words of Visconti or paralysed by her own quarrels, which even thus early began to revive from the stupor of pestilence, no vigorous measures of security were taken against him after the occupation of Pistoia and Sambuca. The latter, a strong frontier post commanding the passes of the Bolognese Apennines which lead down on the former, was even negligently lost to Giovanni Visconti d'Oleggio the archbishop's reputed son, and that city itself only preserved by his unnecessary delay, at only four miles distance, to concentrate his forces ere he commenced the siege.

This inroad was a preconcerted scheme of the Milanese congress where it was settled that the appearance of Visconti's army in Tuscany should be the signal for a general movement of the confederates: those of Romagna with the Ubaldini were to commence operations in the mountains; the Tarlati, Ubertini, and Pazzi, in the Upper Val d'Arno and count Tano da Monte Carelli in the Mugello. The Pisans were expected simultaneously to declare war, but their present ruler Gambacorta, a merchant and the friend of peace and Florence, demanded time, and even a subsequent embassy from Milan failed in securing an object on the success of which Visconti founded his principal hopes of victory*.

The Ubaldini commenced by burning Firenzuola and taking Monte Colloreto through the folly of the governor, who was afterwards beheaded at Florence for his conduct: Piero Sacconi, the Ubertini and the Pazzi followed up this blow without a moment's pause though all were at peace with Florence: that city blind to every premonitory symptom of so extensive an outbreak had made no preparations; her councils were distracted, her citizens astounded, and party violence had destroyed all confidence between man and man†.

* M. Villani, Lib. ii., cap. iv., xx.— Poggio Bracciolini, Ist. di Firenze, Lib. i°.—Corio, Parte iii^a, folio 225.— Istorie Milanese.

† M. Villani, Lib. ii., cap. vi., vii.

The government's first act was to demand why Giovanni d' Oleggio, who had already invested Prato, thus treacherously invaded the territory of a friendly power in time of profound peace; but the only answer was a publication of Visconti's resolve to reform all the Tuscan states, beginning with Florence, and to restore tranquillity both within and without, by persuasion if possible, if not, by force of arms. This insolent message raised the indignation, suppressed the discord, and dispersed every fear of the Florentines; but nevertheless when the Milanese general suddenly advanced with his whole force on Campi and insulted the citizens under their walls, the Seignory still doubtful of internal treason and totally unprepared, was at a loss how to act until reassured by the zeal and coöperation of every order in the commonwealth. The civic companies were assembled in arms and stationed on the ramparts, and confidence revived so rapidly that only those gates nearest to the enemy were closed, all the others remaining open as in times of profound peace; and unsupported by a single mercenary the citizens resolved to defend their town.

But hunger did more than lances: the rural mills had been dismantled, corn could not be ground, and flour was nowhere to be had; whole grain and animal food in small quantities with little or no salt, became the enemy's only sustenance: August heats and gradual deprivation of every supply affected the troops; sufferings were great and general; and this now dispirited army at last attempted to penetrate into the fertile plains of San Salvi eastward of Florence. They were checked by an intrenchment well lined with cross-bows which was suddenly thrown up between Porta San Gallo and the hill of Montughi: a retreat by their former line of march was next attempted, but the people of Prato destroyed the roads; Val di Marina which leads into the province of Mugello offered another outlet; but here retreat was still more difficult for the people rose in a body and occupying the mountain passes showed a determined

front. In this predicament the surrender of Oleggio's army would have been inevitable had not the whole position, strong and difficult as it was, been shamefully abandoned by a Medici with the only force of regular troops in that district. These soldiers although alone insufficient, were zealously seconded by the peasantry, and the passes only admitting the march of troops by single files of infantry or dismounted cavalry, could have been easily defended; but thus deserted the country people retired with deep imprecations on the Florentines who had abandoned them, and now thought only of saving their goods and families.

The Milanese commander was not slow in availing himself of this opening; he instantly occupied the passes, and pushing rapidly through the defiles soon encamped amidst all the abundance of the Mugello: Barberino a strong and well-provided town was treacherously surrendered; Villanova, Gagliano, Latera and other places tendered their obedience and supplied his troops; Count Tano da Monte Carelli declared himself of the league; and this half-famished half-conquered army found itself as if by magic securely triumphing in the heart of a fruitful country.

Nevertheless its departure under any circumstances removed a load of anxiety from Florence; national spirit rose; Scarperia, Borgo a San Lorenzo, Pulicciano and other posts were reenforced; troops were rapidly levied and organised and vigorous preparations made on every side*. Pulicciano fought stoutly although fenced only by a simple palisade, and stood resolutely and successfully against two thousand Barbute a thousand infantry and a strong body of crossbowmen: the Milanese horsemen dismounted, and linking their arms together in a strong line flanked by cross-bows, moved steadily up the hill like a band of steel and after a fierce and well-sustained encounter were broken and driven back in confusion.

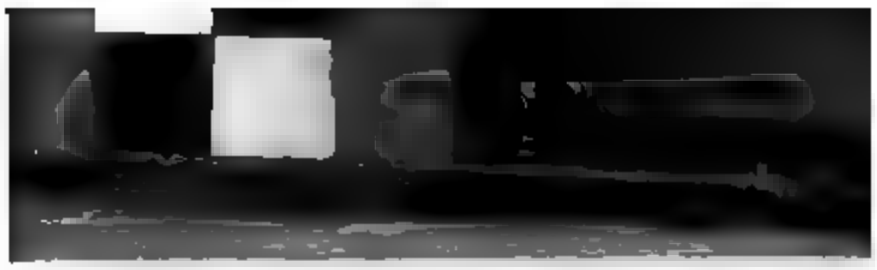
* M. Villani, Lib. ii., cap. viii. to xv.—Poggio Bracciolini, Lib. i°.

But while war raged in the Mugello the Aretine frontier was not tranquil: Piero Sacconi, now ninety years of age together with the Bishop of Arezzo, the Ubertini, and the Pazzi of Valdarno, made a combined attack on the Florentine territory but were promptly repulsed: Albertaccio de' Ricasoli who commanded the Florentines was charged with treachery for not completing his victory by destroying the enemy while in his power; he sternly repelled the accusation, to which however his close connection with many in the hostile army added some force; and as it escaped without loss during the night the troops became indignant especially the Aretines, who sullenly quitted his camp and marched to their capital.

Visconti anxious for Pisa's coöperation sent ambassadors to work on the public mind and turn her citizens to war; but his designs were baffled by the prudence of Gambacorta and the prelate again despaired of success; yet so universal was the dread of his power that Florence could not at any price enlist a single military commander in her defence *.

Thus compelled to trust to the leading of her own citizens she exerted herself nobly and gained such an ascendancy in the Mugello, the principal seat of war, that all public agitation ceased; the ordinary commercial transactions were resumed as if in peace; the monthly interest of national debt was punctually discharged, and the whole people assumed an aspect of so much confidence as to produce a strong moral effect on the enemy. The siege of Scarperia was nevertheless begun and pushed on with such vigour by Giovanni d' Oleggio that the place was soon reduced to extremity: Florence strained every nerve to relieve it and impatiently expected six hundred men-at-arms from Perugia. This reënforcement had in fact begun its march and halted at a place called l'Olmo about two miles from the friendly city of Arezzo; but Piero Sacconi was then at Bibbiena and hearing of the delay determined to surprise it

* Corio, Hist. Milan., Parte iii^a, folio 225.



with four hundred horse and two thousand infantry. His footmen were rapidly brought down from the Casentino and placed in ambush amongst the hills in rear of the Perugians while he suddenly charged their front at the head of his cavalry: surprised but not daunted they fought stoutly took the old chieftain prisoner, and would probably have gained the day had not an unexpected occurrence baffled all their efforts.

Arezzo after the recovery of her independence had been always more or less a prey to faction and like all other Italian republics was continually vexed by the ambition of private citizens; there as elsewhere a firm and general pressure was required; not so heavy as to oppress liberty or impede individual enterprise, but sufficient to repel the high-reaching fancies of those citizens who find no peace or satisfaction in equality. After the Tarlati's expulsion the Guelphic family of Boscoli became the most powerful of her citizens, and as a matter of course the most overbearing and tyrannical: this occasioned their expulsion in 1347, but only to make way for other Guelphs of the Brandagli race who were equally ambitious and despotic. Both had made external professions of friendship to Florence but merely to suit their own objects, which like those of Sacconi were absolute power in Arezzo: but the Brandagli could not accomplish this without the assistance of exiles, and as the Tarlati were the ablest and most powerful of these, their alliance was sedulously courted.

The old chieftain's capture offered a fair occasion, wherefore promptly assembling their forces they hurried with a numerous body to the field, and under the character of allies of Florence persuaded the Perugians to commit the custody of Piero Sacconi to them; but no sooner was he placed in their power than he received his liberty and the Brandagli retired to Arezzo without further interference.

Piero soon rallied his men and recommenced the fight while his infantry suddenly descending in the enemy's rear com-

pletely overpowered them and he led three hundred prisoners away in triumph to Bibbiena. This paralysed every offensive movement on the part of Florence, increased the difficulty of relieving Scarperia, and almost banished hope from the hearts of its brave defenders. Nevertheless the Florentines determined to attempt something and despatched Giovanni Visdomini a brave and skilful soldier, who volunteered with only thirty followers to relieve them: with prompt and determined courage he went straight to his object and suddenly coming on the besiegers' camp burst through it with the speed of lightning carrying his little band of heroes safely into the place. The military reputation of Visdomini and his successful audacity gave new spirit to the garrison while their enemy angry and mortified closed round the town in denser lines, determined to prevent any successful repetition of this boldness; yet a chief of the Medici with only one hundred footmen, his own good fame, and a skilful guide, pushed by night through the hills, forced the Milanese camp after a sharp encounter, and with eighty men made good his entrance *.

Exasperated at this double defeat by such contemptible forces Oleggio renewed his exertions and with fresh troops and the promise of double pay resolved on a general assault †. Every warlike machine then in use was carefully prepared, and numerous lofty towers were wheeled with great labour to within crossbow-shot of the defences; the storm then began: not a sound or a movement was to be perceived in Scarperia; all remained as still as night: but when the assailants, having passed the outer ditch, were engaged in the second and had even laid some ladders to the walls, suddenly and by preconcerted signals such a tempest of stones, arrows, lances,

* M. Villani, Lib. ii., cap. xx. to xxiii.

† "*Paga doppia e mese compiuto*," or double pay and the month complete, was the form of expression for rewards given to the troops after great victories. The pay was counted monthly, not daily; and the month's pay was given in advance, as if finished, when the army was thus rewarded.

beams of timber, and other missiles thundered on their heads as nothing could withstand: from every part; far and near; within, without; above, below; was one incessant shower of death; not a shaft flew in vain, every stone struck, and the slaughter was commensurate. The assailants though continually relieved by fresh troops and bravely fighting, could not long stand up against such weapons so wielded by the skill and courage of the garrison: they were stricken back from the walls, surge after surge, like waves from a rock, nor could they even approach the palisade where no ramparts existed; there was a certain line beyond which was death, and of the sixty-four ladders they had carried to the first ditch, only three reached the second in safety and there were instantly abandoned.

The attack failed, the troops fell back in disorder, a conscious shame overwhelmed their chiefs which they strove to conceal or else get rid of in the galleries of a mine; but even here they were baffled, for the garrison retrenched the wall within, and countermined without: this brought the enemy's whole force against their workmen; severe shooting was kept up from a wooden tower; the assailants were reënforced, the counterminers more closely protected; and the besiegers' mine, discovered only forty feet from the walls, was at once filled up, the props burned, and the enemy's workmen dispersed or slaughtered. An impetuous onslaught was simultaneously made by all the covering force; it was repulsed, the wooden tower with another more distant were reduced to ashes and the whole strength of Milan once more compelled to retreat with shame and disappointment to the camp.

Winter was now approaching; forage and other supplies began to fail, and fears then rife in the Milanese camp of being ultimately baffled by a half-fortified town, determined Oleggio Visconti to risk one other assault ere his final departure.

Fascines were therefore collected, new towers and engines

constructed and immediately rolled to the ditch, each ready with its archer-garrison to be again pushed over it. The army was once more under arms and marshalled; on a signal given the light-infantry and "*Guastatori*" advanced with their fagots in rapid succession and filled the outer moat, then passed on to the second and made all level: meanwhile the men-at-arms dismounted and with lowered visors began to roll the heavy engines across both ditches and plant them close against the walls. The now more confident garrison suffered much of this ere any resistance was offered; they abode their time; suddenly as before; a storm of beams and stones, arrows and sharpened stakes, fell thick and fast and repelled the assailants to the outer fosse the towers being too closely pressed to cover or assist them; all this was followed up by bold and bloody sallies which soon shortened and confirmed the day, driving Oleggio from his ground with engines burned and spirit-tamed and everywhere discomfited. Yet there was no lack of courage, or any despondency: if the spirit bowed, it was but for a moment: the troops retreated; but the German chiefs and vassals who had been scarcely engaged, were now appealed to; they were excited by double pay, by present shame, and future honours, to storm once more this weak but well-defended fortress.

These had their effect; three hundred volunteers, all knights-bachelors, were selected and ordered to arm without noise and be ready at midnight for the attack: the troops then retired to their tents, but at the appointed hour were again awake and under arms: a solemn silence pervaded camp and country; the moon was high, the night serene and beautiful; canvas and corslet glittered in her beam, but the town's deep shadow spread like a funeral pall upon the place of conflict. This circumstance was taken advantage of and skilfully improved: the plan of attack was explained, and then, armed at all points, the stormers glided like phantoms into that darkness which now

served to conceal them, while their comrades with drums and trumpets, cheers and clang of arms, marched briskly through a broad flood of moonlight towards the opposite quarter. The town seemed still and silent, half obscured half bright, marking its towers and turrets on the grass: its weary soldiers weak from the morning's work strode calmly to their posts, no way deceived by this boisterous movement but watching with keener eye the stealthy advance of the others. Not a tower nor merlon was unmanned, good marksmen were stationed to pick off the nearest of the false attack while the real body of stormers was allowed to place their ladders in silence and even for a while to mount; but when clustering like bees upon each other they prepared to enter, the oft-repeated storm came clattering on their heads, and knight and ladder went headlong down in one promiscuous ruin: this crash was decisive; all that could escape fled to the main body; and even there, though the cry was greater than the work, many had fallen by the Florentine marksmen. Vigorous sallies were again made with success and the struggle was continued: when morning dawned Oleggio's army was in full retreat, as yet followed only by part of the garrison; but very soon the remainder with one loud and general cheer completed the victory. After a few days the siege was raised and a further retreat to Bologna most skilfully effected on the sixteenth of October 1351 in defiance of every effort of the Florentines.

Thus ended the campaign; in which a treacherous and formidable attempt to annihilate Florence as an independent state signally failed: a brave and experienced army of two thousand knights, five thousand Barbute, and six thousand foot was baffled for sixty-one days by a miserable, small, half-open town in a distant province; and though supported by secrecy discipline and treachery, and with the terror of Visconti's name, retired in disgrace after three months' occupation of a surprised unprepared country! Such is the uncertain chance of war, and

such the difficulty of subduing men of honour and determination*.

The brave commanders and garrison were rewarded by a decree of the commonwealth; several nobles who distinguished themselves in the siege were honoured by the loss of their nobility and restoration to all the rights of citizenship, and the inhabitants were exempted from every public burden for ten years†.

This demonstration of the power and unscrupulous ambition of Visconti excited universal detestation and alarm at Florence and urged her to more extensive measures of defence: wherefore during the siege of Scarperia she renewed her alliance with Siena and Perugia, sent ambassadors for a similar purpose into Romagna and a special embassy to Avignon to strengthen herself if possible by Pope Clement's support, whom she naturally considered to be an implacable enemy to the Ghibeline prelate. Arezzo was also invited with considerable offers of territory to join the league for Florence was liberal in her concessions to a city that she hoped ere long to have again under her control. By this league the Florentines engaged to furnish a thousand men-at-arms besides infantry and archers, and their levies exceeded their contingent: but without confidence in Clement and anticipating nothing but ill success in their struggle against Milanese gold and intrigues at the court of Avignon, they resolved to trust principally to their own resources, and therefore created a board of twenty citizens to form a new and more productive scale of imposts. This however was insufficient to allay the terror of Visconti's ambition which rose so high that throwing aside inveterate prejudices they even went so far as to invite the late emperor's son Louis of Bavaria to enter Italy, and it was only his excessive pretensions that finally broke off the negotiation‡.

* M. Villani, Lib. ii., cap. xxi. to xxiii., and xxix. to xxxiv.— Poggio Bracciolini, Lib. i°.—Cronaca di Donato Velluti, p. 93.

† S. Ammirato, Lib. x., p. 535.— Poggio Bracciolino, Lib. i°.

‡ S. Ammirato, Lib. x., p. 537.— M. Villani, Lib. ii., cap. xlvi.

The pernicious custom of employing foreign mercenaries for national wars had long been undermining all military spirit in Italy, and the purely commercial states more eagerly adopted a system which left them at liberty to follow their peaceful and lucrative occupations; but it was not until this moment that the first, greatest, and most decisive blow was given to this spirit by legal enactments. The new financial board amongst other expedients for the Milanese war commuted all personal service from the rural population of the Contado for a sum amounting to ten soldi a day for each foot soldier, and payable three times a year: fifty-two thousand golden florins were thus raised and all Italy soon followed the seducing example.

It was indeed a great momentary relief and universally applauded as a wise and statesmanlike act; but it was also pregnant with unforeseen, or at least unheeded evil; an evil which became fatally manifest and universally deplored when Italy afterwards found herself at the mercy of cruel unprincipled and rapacious strangers *.

Although this decree did not legally extend further than the Contado, it deadened the native spirit, gave full scope to the petrifying selfishness of the mere trader unrelieved by the generous chivalry of soldiers.

The nobler human feelings are perhaps pretty equally distributed by nature through every class, but occasionally smothered or modified by peculiar circumstances: the grasping, selfish influence commonly engendered in trade, although relieved by many honourable exceptions, still sullies or suspends their action and often altogether destroys them, but they swell and expand and blossom amidst the perils of a soldier's life: a periodical remuneration for services performed or expected, leaves time and room for feeling, honour, and generosity; but the hard every-day barter of, this for that; the strife of gain, the race of cunning, is a better sharpener of wit than a nurse of generous feeling; yet when soldiers become mere hirelings

* Leon. Aretino, Lib. vii., p. 128, 141.—S. Ammirato, Lib. x., p. 537.

they imbibe the spirit without even the conventional honesty or certain usefulness of trade, and those who abandon their country's protection to such people must soon become the scorn and prey of their protectors.

This act, coupled with the lately-established system of loans and public funds, removed many of the existing inconveniences and therefore many of the voluntary checks of war, which is always less considered when only the interest of its cost is called for and when the inconvenience of personal service is commuted for a slight pecuniary sacrifice.

Besides these imposts the new board of ways and means levied a tax on hearths which amounted to 140 golden florins a day: the clergy were also taxed afresh, the amount being levied by themselves; and these with some smaller taxation raised the annual revenue to 360,000 golden florins*.

Amongst these minor imposts was a very singular one called "*La Gabella delle Querimonie*" or tax on complaints, which was exacted from those who believing themselves aggrieved by the government the magistrates or any public servant, were simple enough to demand redress and suppose they would obtain it. This is perhaps the only instance on record of a government boldly directly and systematically imposing a penalty on the demand for justice against itself, and of a people with the name of liberty in their mouth submitting to it even for a season; we have the evil in abundance at home but are occasionally somewhat ashamed of it. Whether from its unpopularity or unproductiveness it was repealed at the year's end and expired along with its authors, for they were now replaced by a new financial board called the "*Regulatori*" composed of a citizen from each quarter, one being a noble, with full powers to augment or diminish taxation according to public necessity†. A.D. 1352.

* M. Villani, Lib. ii., cap. xlvi.—S. Ammirato, Lib. x., p. 537.

† S. Ammirato, Lib. x., p. 549.

About this epoch the expense of embassies had become so burdensome to private individuals that few were found willing to accept them until salaries were augmented in proportion to the dignity of those employed and that of the court to which they were accredited; but after this the refusal of such missions was prohibited under a penalty of 500 florins and inelegibility to every public office *.

From the citizens who discharged these functions at Avignon intelligence had arrived which confirmed all previous suspicions of Pope Clement's intentions, and the subsequent confirmation of Visconti for twelve years in the lordship of Bologna dissipated the very slender expectations that had hitherto been entertained of his assistance. A hundred thousand florins paid by Milan with twelve thousand more of annual tribute, besides bribes to cardinals, ministers, and mistresses, especially to the Countess of Turenne who ruled the pontiff, reconciled that spiritual father to his haughty son.

Indignant at this proceeding the Florentines immediately published a treaty which had for some time been secretly concluded between Siena, Perugia, themselves, and the emperor Charles IV. by which this offspring of their great enemy was to be acknowledged as future emperor and receive 200,000 florins on condition that he would instantly furnish three thousand men-at-arms, and make war upon the archbishop in Lombardy throughout the whole of July, with twice that number of soldiers, besides other services.

Five ambassadors were despatched to the imperial court to finish these arrangements, with peremptory orders to ask no personal favour under a penalty of 2000 florins; a precaution rendered necessary by the prevalent habit of sacrificing public good to private interest. Matters were however not well managed; the union was of essentially discordant materials and against the natural ally of one party: besides which,

* S. Ammirato, Lib. x., p. 538.

Florentine sarcasm offended imperial pride while Milanese gold was soothing; and finally Ghibeline arguments and propensities were far more effective than Guelphic diplomacy. The alliance was only engendered by the force of existing circumstances and therefore easily dissolved; so that the embassy returned unsuccessful and all hope of assistance disappeared in that quarter*.

Meanwhile it became expedient to punish the Tarlati, Pazzi, and Ubertini for their treachery, and accordingly six hundred men-at-arms with a very numerous infantry were sent against them; Bibbiena, Soci, Cornia, Gaenna, Penna and other places were taken and Piero Sacconi defeated; whereupon this successful expedition returned with many prisoners to Florence†.

Francesco Castracani was similarly treated in Lunigiana and Garfagnana where at the secret instigation of Pisa he had siezed on Coriglia as afterwards on Sorana, and delivered them both up to that republic; then with three hundred Milanese auxiliaries he laid siege to Barga, a stronghold of Florence, which after four months' defence was relieved by twenty thousand Florentine infantry and six hundred cavalry in the following October with the entire defeat of Francesco‡.

The indefatigable old chieftain Piero Sacconi, though now more than ninety, no sooner saw his enemy's troops well occupied in this expedition than full of energy and untamed by misfortune he mustered his ready followers and attacked a suburb of Arezzo; but with the aid of a hundred Florentine cavalry, who happened to sleep there on their march from Perugia, he was repulsed by the inhabitants. Turned off here he moved rapidly down the Val d'Arno, pounced suddenly on Tiglini and totally destroyed it ere a single soldier could arrive from Florence; then carrying off his booty returned to Arezzo,

* M. Villani, Lib. iii., cap. iv., v., vi., vii., xiii., and xxx.

† S. Ammirato, Lib. x.

‡ M. Villani, Lib. iii., cap. xii., xxxv.

insulted the citizens, and with his Milanese auxiliaries and other allies dispersed into winter quarters*.

In the Mugello the Ubaldini still continued their hostile movements and were besieging Lozzoli which they had nearly reduced to extremities when Giovanni Alberti with two hundred men-at-arms and fifteen hundred foot was despatched with a convoy of provisions to relieve it. Alberti to secure his object occupied two important positions on the heights of Malacoda and Vagliano with eight hundred infantry, while he with all the cavalry and six hundred foot placed himself at Prati to protect the convoy, which under the guard of a hundred picked soldiers was to force an entrance through the enemy's lines. This last service was gallantly and successfully executed; but in the interim seventy peasants and thirty women advanced with loud cries and half-armed towards the post of Malacoda and struck so great a panic into the troops that they hastily demanded assistance from Alberti: fifty horsemen were promptly ordered to their support but these also took the alarm and lacked courage even to approach their comrades, who with increasing terror fled in confusion. The peasantry though scarcely believing their senses followed up the pursuit until the detachment on Vagliano catching the panic also abandoned their post and joined the fugitives: even the Vicar of the Mugello, Alberti himself, caught the strange infection and was the first to arrive with the news of his own discomfiture at Scarperia! Thus fourteen hundred infantry and two hundred cavalry were put to flight by seventy peasants and thirty old women, with the loss of four hundred and fifty prisoners, one hundred and twenty of whom were men-at-arms; while a hundred of their companions forced the enemy's lines victualled the fortress after a sharp conflict and marched safely out again the following morning.

This incident, individually trifling, serves to show on what

* M. Villani, Lib. iii., cap. xxxvi., xxxviii.

mere accidents the fate of war depends, and consequently how the most scientific measures may sometimes fail although planned with all the skill of long experience and ability.

Both belligerents now began to tire of war, for Visconti saw that little impression could be made on Florence unless with the assistance of Pisa, and the only objection of the former state was a total distrust in the archbishop's sincerity: Lotto Gambacorta was the friend of both and desirous of peace, and Pope Clement's death which occurred in the following December accelerated its approach. This pontiff was luxurious licentious and extravagant; he perpetuated the pontifical residence in France by the purchase of Avignon where the debauchery of the papal court had long been notorious, and so far from improving under Clement it provoked the indignation of all those who really and religiously venerated the church, amongst them Petrarca, whose three sonnets on the modern Babylon are themselves sufficient to consign Clement and his whole court to everlasting infamy. So glaring indeed were these priestly irregularities that a satirical epistle was picked up in the presence-chamber, dropped as was supposed by a cardinal, purporting to be written by his Satanic Majesty to his brother Clement VI. and filled with praises and congratulations on the conduct of himself and his courtiers whose vices were especially enumerated, and which he was assured would not fail to secure them a high and distinguished rank in the infernal regions. Stefano di Alberto Bishop of Ostia succeeded Clement VI. under the name of Innocent VI. and with a fair moral character, though undistinguished by talent or learning, immediately commenced a reform of his predecessor's long-continued irregularities*.

The Gambacorti of Pisa were still exerting themselves to re-establish peace between Florence and Milan, and so far suc-

* Poggio Bracciolini, Lib. i°. — M. Villani, Lib. ii°, cap. xlviii., and Lib. iii°, cap. xliii.

ceeded in dissipating the suspicions of the former about Visconti's sincerity as to induce both parties to send commissioners to Serezzana and begin the negotiations. A treaty was therefore signed on the thirty-first of March including all the allies of both belligerents, but with little gain on either side beyond a mutual promise not to meddle with each other's affairs, and some reciprocal commercial advantages.

A.D. 1353.

Peace however, if not disgraceful is always welcome, and Florence thus lightened of the cares and expense of war turned again to self-reformation. Amongst other evils, springing from the prepotency of individual families in small states, robbery on a large scale had become so frequent and alarming, and in despite of the Podestà's vigilance so difficult of detection, that scarcely a single night passed without some audacious act of private plunder. These were not the petty enterprises of common housebreakers but extensive depredations committed by individuals belonging to the highest families in the commonwealth, nor was their rank less conspicuous than their plans were ingenious. A large party of young gentlemen was wont to assemble after nightfall in the destined spot with lutes trumpets and other musical instruments, as if about to serenade some lady of the neighbourhood ; and while a few of the first rank were stationed at both ends of the street imploring random passengers not to insist on passing and disturb the entertainment, the rest shrouded by night and song and overpowering music, were busy at their work: any house was thus entered in safety and for a long time they baffled every effort of the magistrates; but finally a bold handsome and fascinating youth of the Bordoni family was detected amongst them. His father and uncle had been gonfaloniers of justice; his brother an ambassador at the imperial court; his family was therefore of the highest rank, and rich and powerful in its parentage and numerous followers. Confiding in this the culprit fearlessly appeared at the Podestà's summons and

unhesitatingly avowed his guilt: he would have been instantly executed had not the family influence, as he expected, bound the seignory to his cause and overcome all legal authority. The Podestà's guards and attendants were abruptly dismissed by the priors; but being thus publicly defied and insulted even by the government itself, he broke his staff of office and retired in anger to Siena, leaving his final vindication in the hands of the people.

It was in good keeping: all Florence was soon in a ferment: stern demands for justice were heard on every side: public indignation rose like a flame: "punishment," as the people asserted, "was only for the poor and weak; impunity for the "rich and powerful: the latter triumphed unharmed in all "their wickedness while the former were led like sheep to the "slaughter-house for the slightest fault." Such were the cries that resounded through the town: every wall and corner were scribbled with charcoal expressive of this feeling, and so general was the anger that a new seignory to prevent tumult were compelled to reinstate the Podestà's attendants and despatch messengers to that high dignitary humbly imploring his return. They had the effrontery to assert that what had been done was only to retard justice, not destroy it, or derogate in any way from his authority. This was accompanied by a remuneration of 2000 florins, and Paolo Vaiani accordingly resumed his functions, returned triumphantly to Florence, condemned and decapitated the young Bordini, banished many of his accomplices, and ultimately succeeded in purging the city of these nocturnal disorders *.

About the same time one of those numerous famines that successively afflicted Florence and all other parts of Italy in consequence of restrictive laws on the commerce of food, became so distressing that a suspension of the duties on butchers' meat as well as on corn, wine, oil; and every other sort of sus-

* M. Villani, Lib. iii., cap. lviii. – Scip. Ammirato, Lib. x., p. 543, &c.

tenance from the Valdinievole, was resorted to for general relief thus indicating the extreme impolicy of such restrictions; for the same freedom of commercial action that will relieve distress in periods of universal calamity must impart more vigour to individual and general exertions in prosperous times, and therefore contribute to prevent the suffering which it is called in to mitigate.

This calamity increased the desire for external quiet, and anxious for general tranquillity as a commercial state, the Florentines exerted themselves to make peace between Siena and the Cavalieri lords of Montepulciano; both were Guelphs and members of the league and their agreement was of general importance; but the latter were now besieged by the former, and this disunion weakening the confederacy Perugia earnestly joined in the mediation; hostilities ceased; Montepulciano resumed its popular form of government and was placed for twenty years under the protection of Siena while the Cavalieri were to receive due compensation; but Siena afterwards failing in this part of the treaty roused the indignation of Florence who was a guarantee for its performance, and nearly occasioned war between these two republics *.

Usurpation was a lucrative branch of trade in these restless days; for if any powerful citizen succeeded in gaining the lordship of his native city and afterwards found himself too weak to keep it, he could always sell the troublesome acquisition to some potent neighbour, and the right thus acquired, the right of present possession, was never theoretically disputed while the power of retaining the country remained to the purchaser. But these usurpations were generally preceded by long and bloody struggles between rival houses, which kept cities in a continual state of vexation and tormented the whole community: sometimes the people were roused, and expelled

* M. Villani, Lib. iii., cap. lxiv. and lxxviii.

both factions, but oftener put themselves under the protection of a more powerful state.

In this way the inhabitants of San Gimignano vexed and tired by continual rivalry between the Salvucci and Ardinghi or Ardinghelli, two potent families that kept them in constant tribulation, resolved to give the city to Florence and sacrifice their native independence for the sake of internal peace. The Ardinghelli at once bowed to popular opinion, but their rivals though too weak to oppose it, remonstrated so effectually against the injustice of profiting by civil dissension to clutch at the sovereignty of a friendly state without the general consent, that Florence honestly refused it unless two hundred and fifty of the principal inhabitants of San Gimignano appeared before the seignory as the authorised representatives of the whole community and formally resigned their independence. But when even this was complied with the proposition only passed by a majority of one vote in the Florentine councils and under the most liberal conditions; six months' residence in Florence being sufficient to acquire the rights of citizenship. The state of San Gimignano was incorporated in the Contado, and made a league or military division in itself under the command of the actual Podestà; but all nobles above the age of fifteen were expelled the town until the erection of a citadel; so universal was the dread of aristocratic turbulence in every free community *.

War was at this time waging with great animosity between the Genoese and Venetians; the latter had been defeated at Constantinople and the former swept triumphantly up the Adriatic insulting even Venice itself. Eager for revenge a united fleet of Venetians and Catalans was despatched to the Sardinian seas and a decisive victory gained over their common enemy: the discomfiture was so complete that Florence ever fearful and suspicious of Milan thought it necessary to send an

* M. Villani, Lib. ii°, cap. lxxiii.

embassy of condolence to Genoa with friendly offers of assistance; but that once proud and domineering city was now so disheartened, from intestine discord rather than fear or weakness, as to offer itself to Visconti who eagerly accepting the gift took military possession of Genoa and nearly quarrelled with Florence for her sympathy. The latter although anxious for peace had great difficulty to preserve it, and Pisa becoming uneasy at seeing herself shouldered by so powerful a neighbour drew closer towards her: the most advantageous overtures from Venice, (now brought into collision with the archbishop) were therefore refused; but peace remained unbroken only because Visconti was not as yet sufficiently prepared for its violation.

This danger over the year finished by one of those reversed acts of honorary distinction that are in such marked contrast to the general sentiments of the present day. Domenico de' Cavalcanti who had long associated on terms of equality and familiarity with the people was rewarded by a complete emancipation from all ties of nobility and the honour of a collocation in the more solid, beneficial, and therefore the more courted order of the democracy *.

CONTEMPORARY MONARCHS.—Changes since last Chapter:—Castile and Leon: Alphonso XI. died in 1350; succeeded by Peter the Cruel.—France. Philip VI. of Valois, died 1350; succeeded by John the Good.—Popes: Clement VI. died in 1352; then Innocent VI.

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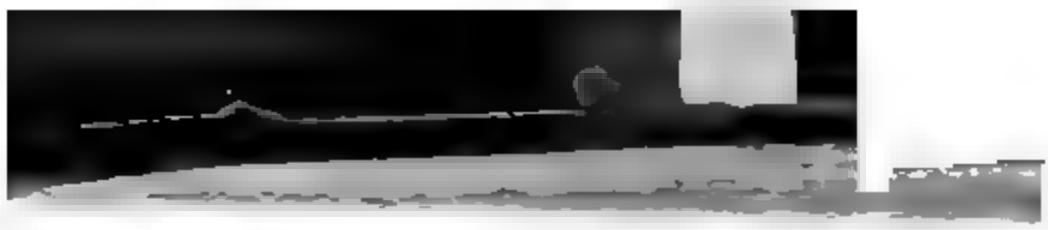
* Petrarca, Letters, Vide De Sade, vol. iii., p. 329.—M. Villani, Lib. iii°, cap. lxviii., lxxix., lxxxvi., lxxxvii.—Poggio Bracciolini, Lib. i°, p. xxi. (Ed. Firenze, 1598.)



CHAPTER XXIII.

FROM A.D. 1354 TO A.D. 1359.

The treaty of Serazzana though already endangered by Visconti spread universal satisfaction throughout the Florentine states, and Tuscany once more at peace looked forward to a smoother period of repose. But nations like individuals are not always able to stave off misfortune, for the unbalanced passions and self-balanced interests of men however wisely contrived, are seldom worked for general or even individual good and too often frustrate the beneficent intentions of their Maker. At the very moment when calm and sunshine were alone expected a cloud rose darkly in the south and cast its dismal shadow over all the Italian peninsula. A.D. 1354.

The "Fra Moriale," or more properly the chevalier "Montreal d'Albani," a Provençal knight of Saint John of Jerusalem and a man of high military reputation, after distinguishing himself under the Hungarian banner had followed Duke Werner's system and tarrying in the Neapolitan states contrived by regulating, without restraining military licence, to maintain himself and his followers at the expense of the country.

In 1352 Queen Giovanna, individually powerless, engaged Malatesta of Rimini with a strong force to dislodge him from the city of Aversa: he was soon also expelled from her dominions, and with a few followers entered the papal service; being badly paid, he engaged with Giovanni di Vico, lord of Viterbo, Orvieto, and other cities of which he had possessed

himself. Giovanni, a conqueror in his way, an enemy of the church, and generally entitled the "*Prefect of Rome*," was at that moment about to make an attempt on the city of Todi in which he failed, and Montreal then finding himself at liberty conceived the audacious project of making all Italy his tributary by means of the foreign mercenary soldiers who abounded everywhere ready to join any leader of reputation, and fair promises. He soon assembled fifteen hundred Barbute with two thousand infantry, and commenced operations in 1353 by invading La Marca, driving Malatesta from the siege of Fermo, and successively taking forty-four of his fortified towns before winter had finished. This rapid progress attracted numerous adventurers; soldiers became impatient for the end of their engagements with other states, and many accelerated their dismissal by premeditated crime for the sake of a speedier junction with the "*Great company.*" The Chevalier de Montreal governed his people by a well-devised code of regulations: there was a treasurer who received and distributed all plunder, besides two councils, and certain secretaries to manage general affairs: regular portions of booty were assigned and paid to each soldier according to his rank; all bulky and marketable articles were sold to a congregation of traders that followed the camp whose persons and property were scrupulously respected. Implicit obedience was enforced; strict and summary justice administered between man and man, and perfect order reigned within; but all without wàs one wild scene of murder devastation and violence only to be avoided by large pecuniary contributions *.

Malatesta staggering under this tempest made a personal appeal to the principal Tuscan states, and endeavoured to convince them that an instant and vigorous union could alone avert the evil which he asserted would soon shake the whole frame

* M. Villani, Lib. iii., cap. cvii., cix. —De Sade, Memoirs pour la Vie de Petrarque, vol. iii., Lib. v., p. 354.

of society by the powerful attractions of a life so dissolute and lucrative. But the storm was then distant and the Tuscans consequently languid or heedless: Siena and Perugia agreed to follow the motions of Florence; but Florence herself, though more awake to the danger, was satisfied with sending to Malatesta a force of only two hundred horse: the insufficiency of these was so evident that he at once refused their services and resolved to make a separate peace with the company.

Montreal's army was now augmented by Malatesta's disbanded troops besides a fresh reënforcement of German adventurers high in rank, unscrupulous in conscience, all acknowledging his supreme military authority, but not his absolute power. The Provençal chief was assisted by a council of four German secretaries chosen from the cavalry, and four Italian colonels from the line: this board decided on the plan of military operations and all secret business, while another assembly of forty officers and the treasurer managed the finances and lent or paid money at the general's command. There was scarcely a condottiere in Italy whoever he served but had a part of his retainers attached to the grand company, which therefore feared no state that trusted entirely to mercenaries for protection.

The Chevalier de Montreal fully realised his expectations: La Marca had been rifled; Malatesta despoiled and finally compelled to purchase his own safety for 40,000 florins; Naples had fraudulently offered an equal sum to prevent an inroad and suffered for her dishonesty; 30,000 more were paid by Forlì and Gentile di Mogliano; and Perugia, Siena, Arezzo, Florence and Pisa soon followed the dangerous example: he was courted by Venice to serve against Visconti; by Visconti against Venice and her Lombard allies, but held both in suspense and again treated with Giovanni di Vico to make war on the pontiff.

No one could penetrate his designs until the month of May 1354 when he suddenly marched to Foligno and with an eye

on Tuscany, persuaded the bishop to admit his troops unarmed within the town for the purchase of supplies on the assurance of just payment, a promise rigidly adhered to for the sake of ulterior objects *. The vicinity of this formidable chief startled the slumbers of Perugia which with Florence and Siena renewed their former confederacy and assembled considerable forces in its own neighbourhood: but Montreal unwilling to encounter them maintained a most rigid discipline at Foligno hoping thus to dissolve the league by courting Perugia from whom he merely requested supplies and an unmolested passage through her territory. Too happy at so flattering a proposal the Perugians at once broke faith with their allies and cheerfully granted all his demands; nay they warned neither Siena nor Florence, whose troops were with them, of this disgraceful proceeding.

The chain of defence thus broken and the gates of Tuscany unbarred, Montreal resumed his devastating course towards Montepulciano and wasted the Senese territory: this state whose forces were assembled at Perugia, finding itself thus exposed, neither demanded assistance from nor thought of Florence, but secretly paying 3000 florins to the leaders, and 13,000 openly to the company concluded a hasty and shameless treaty which turned these robbers back on the Aretine territory, where they were propitiated by general and abundant supplies.

The gonfalonier, Mari de' Medici, beholding this tide of war rolling fast towards Florence made a hasty agreement with Pisa for the service of two thousand cavalry, and this inspired so much confidence that the seignory determined to concede nothing; when Montreal therefore sent an ambassador with peaceful offers expressing his willingness to accept a trifling pecuniary aid to expedite his march into Lombardy where Venice expected him, his request was peremptorily and haughtily refused. Thus sternly treated and knowing that all

* M. Villani, Lib. iii., cap. cix.

the Florentine forces were assembled in the Upper Val d'Arno, he suddenly marched towards Siena and thence to Staggia, declaring his resolution to carry fire and sword through the contado unless it were ransomed by a heavy contribution. The Florentines trusting to their Pisan auxiliaries sternly repelled the demand, and when they became aware that scarcely a tenth of these were forthcoming the contingents of Siena and Perugia were instantly summoned, according to treaty: Montreal however had quieted both these states who merely answered that they were at peace with the company. Thus abandoned Florence had only to make the best terms she could and therefore on the fourth of July sent Niccolò Ridolfi and Paulo Covoni to negotiate: but Montreal determined to make her pay dearly for the recent bravado, so without deigning to answer he advanced to San Casciano and thence to Sant Andrea within six miles of the capital, plundering all the country in his march. On the sixth he condescended to grant a peace for 28,000 florins and then retired to Montevarchi where the money was disbursed, 3000 being secretly paid to the two chiefs Montreal and Conrad Count of Landau, or Lando as he is called in Italian history: 16,000 florins besides other supplies were subsequently extorted from Pisa, and then the wave rolled onward to the plains of Lombardy.

But this great adventurer's course was nearly run: having provided for his army during the winter by a treaty with Venice and her allies which gave him 150,000 florins for four months' service, Montreal left Count Lando in command and repaired to Rome; either invited by Colonna to oppose Cola di Rienzi who had recovered his influence; or to secure the performance of certain promises made by that ruler at Perugia to his brothers; or else with the intention of secretly preparing for the plunder of Naples during the following spring: he entered Rome with so much the more confidence because Rienzo was indebted to him and his brothers for both troops and money,

and almost for the recovery of his actual position in the Roman commonwealth *.

But the tribune along with his pristine dignity had resumed all his pompous pretensions to universal power as the representative of ancient Rome; and whether he suspected Montreal's intentions; or his supposed secret understanding with Colonna; or was prompted by avarice, he became eager to rid himself of both debt and obligation at a blow.

The chevalier had not therefore been long in Rome ere he was secretly accused of a design on Rienzo's life, summoned before the supreme tribunal, charged with being a lawless chief of robbers, the plunderer of La Marca, Romagna, and Tuscany, and the unprovoked perpetrator of every sort of crime. His defence was then called for; but the facts were too notorious, the charges too true for any available excuse even if his death and spoliation had not been predetermined; for though Cola had unscrupulously employed both plunder and plunderers he did not hesitate about Montreal's condemnation, and ordered him to be executed on the twenty-ninth of August 1354. This fate was deserved and most Italians applauded the sentence, but in Rome Rienzo's conduct was condemned as a false pretext for personal spoliation. A popular act if discreetly managed is often the most convenient channel for the current of private malevolence and personal injustice †.

Cola di Rienzo, by one of those sudden revolutions of fortune that chequer human life, after six years of exile, condemnation and imprisonment found himself again clothed in despotic but brief authority, ruling with almost universal consent the very same people who had before sought his destruction. A fugitive at the Hungarian court, a suppliant at the emperor's he still pursued the sepulchral light of Roman

* Vita di Cola di Rienzi.—M. Villani, Lib. iv., cap. xxiii.
† Vita di Cola di Rienzi.—M. Villani, Lib. iv., cap. xliii.—Muratori, Anno 1354.

greatness, and still dreamed of restoring her departed spirit to its corrupt and mouldering tenement. Charles, as it would appear, received him with some honour, but was as deaf to the sound of his eloquence as to the no less persuasive exhortations of Petrarca who endeavoured to inspire him with a spark of his own misplaced but poetical enthusiasm for the tribune, the regeneration of Rome, and the re-exaltation of the imperial dignity *. It would now perhaps be presumptuous, in the face of Petrarca's sentiments, to doubt the effect that might possibly have been produced in Italy by the moral influence of existing circumstances, and the force of individual character in the emperor ; but to a calm observer of the present day, there seems to be more sound discretion in the imperial answer than in the poet's enthusiastic exhortations; and Petrarca might have been as easily mistaken in the consequences of imperial interference as he was disappointed in and afterwards ashamed of the once gentle spirit of Cola di Rienzo †.

Cola was ultimately, and possibly at his own desire, transferred from the emperor's court a prisoner, but almost in triumph to Avignon, where however even the respect for his learning and eloquence, the secret exertions of Petrarca, and the death of Clement himself could scarcely save him from death. Innocent VI. however had no personal enmity against him, and being determined to liberate the ecclesiastical cities from oppression under various tyrants who had usurped their sovereignty and defied the church, he sent him to join the legate Cardinal Albornoz Archbishop of Toledo, who was already in Italy, a prelate accustomed to war and therefore selected as the most appropriate instrument for this enterprise.

The cardinal repaired to Milan in August 1353 where he was suspiciously received by Visconti, and then with the aid of

* Memoires de Sade, vol. ii., Livre iii., p. 321; vol. iii., pp. 68 and 340.—4° ed. 1767.

† Memoires de Sade, vol. iii., pp. 227 and 338. The Emperor said that it was a harder task to get a sunken ship to sea than one which had only suffered in the storm.

a few troops from Florence prosecuted his journey towards Rome, trusting rather to the unpopularity of those whom he came to destroy and the love of democratic government which he had orders to restore, than to his own physical resources or to foreign succours. The Romans under their self-elected tribune Baroncelli, who was afterwards murdered, soon reconciled themselves, but rather as allies than subjects, for order and subjection had long disappeared from that unsettled capital: ever since the fall of Rienzo it had been the theatre of continual and bloody revolutions; the nobles resumed their tyranny, the people their resistance; alternate, indecisive victories, kept the citizens in constant tumult, bloodshed, and alarm; and the private feuds of the Orsini and Savelli maintained this disorder by incessant conflicts in the public streets *.

The democratic rector Giovanni Cerroni although popularly elected called in vain to the people for support, and then left the city in disgust: Innocent entertaining better hopes invested Bertoldo Orsini and Stefano Colonna with the senatorial dignity for the maintenance of order, but the former was stoned in a tumult, from which the latter hardly escaped with life, and anarchy rode wildly triumphant until 1353 when Francesco Baroncelli was chosen as tribune of the Roman people: this man in emulation of Rienzo's energy chastised the factious nobles, vindicated the laws, and restored an uncertain and wavering shadow of repose.

At the arrival of Albornoz Rome was in this deplorable condition and instantly joined his standard; several inferior towns willingly threw open their gates; but the prefect Giovanni determined to defend his new acquisitions, and Orvieto, Viterbo, Trani, Amelia, Narni, Marta and Canino, which he had successively mastered, were prepared for resistance.

The advent of Cola di Rienzo struck like a sunbeam on the benighted Romans, and his errors were forgotten in the moment

* Vita di Cola de Rienzo.—Muratori, Anno 1354.—De Sade, Memoires, vol. iii., Livre v., p. 371.

of excitement: a numerous deputation invited him to resume his ancient authority, but Albornoz was still his master and moreover determined to make use of the tribune's popularity as a means to his own operations: he therefore only consented to restore Cola on condition that the Romans would support him against Giovanni who by some recent cruel and treacherous acts had alienated all his vassals. In consequence of this the prelate made rapid progress and soon reduced him to submission; having now no further excuse for detaining Cola from the Romans who had so zealously supported him, the former tribune under the venerable title of Senator received permission to enter the capital. This was not an easy task, the legate's head-quarters were then at Agobbio; Rienzo had no funds and far too many enemies between that and Rome to venture unattended on such a journey. It was in this difficulty that his promises and seductive eloquence gained Montreal's two brothers who were stationed at Perugia, but the chevalier himself not fully sharing their sanguine expectations repaired in person to Rome as already related.

Rienzo was received with that popular enthusiasm which is not affection; a momentary blaze and then extinguished: he was reinstated in all his former authority, and had an additional weight in the support and sanction of the pope to whose name was still attached a certain degree of deference and respect. But adversity had taught him nothing; his faults were uncorrected, his virtues had evaporated; Montreal's execution however just and merited, came ungratefully from his hand, and the subsequent death of Pandolfo Pandolfucci a man generally respected, with other capricious and tyrannical acts accelerated his growing unpopularity. Stefano Colonna revolted and was besieged in Palestrina; but money failed; arrears of pay increased; the army became discontented and were marched to Rome: new taxes were necessary to appease the soldiers, these exasperated the people, and a sedition followed. Cola was soon

deserted by all his adherents, he shut himself up almost alone in the Capitoline Palace and waited the event: dark masses of insurgents rolled from every quarter on the capitol; his solitude was soon broken and the palace in flames; Rienzo armed as a knight with the popular standard in his hand appeared at the balcony and demanded a parley, but still the dread of his syren eloquence forbad a hearing; he was assailed with stones and arrows, wounded, and compelled to retire: anon appearing in another position he once more implored an audience; but the crowd was inexorable, fierce, and vindictive: they threatened; the Roman tribune wavered: a graceful death and ignominious escape were before him; that certain; this doubtful: he chose the latter. In a mean disguise, with his face blackened, and a load of bedding on his head he had already passed many of the insurgents, hounding them on in the low Roman dialect to plunder; at the palace gate he was arrested by a soldier whom it was said he had previously injured, and avowing himself was instantly surrounded, hurried off to the foot of the capitol and placed before the lion of red porphyry, on the very spot where he had been himself accustomed to read the condemnation of criminals. A profound and awful silence pervaded the assembly; not a voice accused him; not a finger was lifted against him; a long and anxious pause ensued, which he finally broke by one last effort in his own defence: but there was too much magic in his voice, it would have charmed the storm, and a certain Cecco del Vecchio dreading its enchantment sheathed a dagger in his breast: the spell was now broken; blades flashed quick and high; popular fury gathered force, and a host of clashing weapons soon put an end to the tribune's existence: his twice-honoured head rolled bloody in the dust, and his mangled corpse was dragged insultingly through the streets of Rome and finally suspended at a butcher's stall near the market of San Marcello!

Thus perished the famous Cola di Rienzo the "*Spirto gentile*" of Petrarca's bold and beautiful imagination; a man

whose conceptions were greater than his powers, whose vanity overtopped his principles, and who was at once the admiration wonder and contempt of his age and country *. A.D. 1354.

At Florence during the alarm occasioned by Montreal's inroad a private feud, springing from Bordone de' Bordoni's recent condemnation, broke forth in open war between that family and the Mangioni, whose dwellings were suddenly attacked and a lady killed by a javelin in the assault. Public authority assisted by private families quelled the tumult, for which five of the Bordoni with several adherents were banished and their property confiscated.

Amongst those who appeared in arms on this occasion were the rival families of Ricci and Albizzi; with less intention perhaps of preserving tranquillity, than of assisting their friends, or being themselves on the alert in such tumultuous times when the least accident might be seized on by private hatred as an opportunity for revenge or incipient injury. An old and angry feud existed between them, and their slightest movements were reciprocally and jealously watched; some trifling disturbance in the Mercato Vecchio near the houses of the Ricci occasioned a sudden rumour that they were going to attack the Albizzi, and again that the Albizzi were moving against the Ricci: this threw all Florence into confusion for both families were powerful in friends and kindred, the Albizzi alone numbering thirty cousins capable of bearing arms, and both of them being determined leaders of faction with numerous

* In calling Rienzi the "*Spirto gentile*" of Petrarca, I have followed the common opinion, but it seems strange that he should so praise the bitterest enemy of his dearest friends and patrons; and there seems moreover to be internal evidence in the Canzone to contradict this assumption, and justify De Sade's opinion, that it was really addressed to the younger Stephano Colonna, who was made by the Pope Senator of Rome, for five years from 1335, and who moreover enjoyed a great reputation in Italy. Those who are curious on this point may read note x., vol. i., of De Sade.—M. Villani, Lib. iv., cap. ix., x., xiii., xxiii., xxvi.—Vita di Cola di Rienzo, or Frammenti di Storia Romana, Lib. ii., cap. xii., &c.—Muratori, Anno 1354.—De Sade, Mem. vol. iii., Lib. iv., p. 22.—Sismondi, vol. iv.

followers and extensive influence. The whole body of citizens therefore either as kinsmen or political partisans, was attached to one or the other and in arms for their support; but although the alarm proved unfounded and tranquillity remained for the moment unbroken, yet their rivalry only flared up the higher with this sudden blast and cast a deeper glow upon their mutual enmity. The Albizzi, originally from Arezzo, were probably exiled Guelphs; but their opponents trusting to the general impression made by the prevalence of Ghibeline opinions among the Aretines asserted that they must necessarily belong to that faction, and by means of this stigma the Ricci hoped to vanquish them. They placed more confidence in the success of their stratagem in consequence of the emperor's recent appearance in Italy which had already begun to excite apprehensions and prepared the public for any suspicions: both families therefore strengthened themselves with new partisans and were continually struggling for supreme authority.

The origin of that magistracy usually denominated the "*Party Guelph*" and its high authority over all suspected Ghibelines has already been noticed; but time accidents and new sources of discord had so obliterated ancient animosities that many descendants of old Ghibeline families exercised the highest public functions of the commonwealth. Uguccione chief of the Ricci hoped by a renewal of former feelings and persecutions either to humble the Albizzi at one blow by a deprivation of all political power, or to render them suspected if, as was anticipated, they should oppose a law that he intended to enact: wherefore by petition (which was the Florentine form of introducing bills) to the captains of the Party Guelph, he simply proposed that any Ghibeline holding office should be subjected to a penalty of 500 florins; and then quietly awaited the opposition of his rival; for it was a settled maxim in both families to thwart every proposition good or bad that originated with either. But Piero chief of the Albizzi a man of prompt

ability, on learning Ricci's intentions came suddenly from his villa and supported the bill with all his influence: this able manœuvre completely disconcerted Uguccione and placed Piero at the head of the new Guelphic party. The law passed, but remained for the moment inactive for Ricci's personal attack being baffled Piero became indifferent about the matter, and as the whole decree was a mere party trick no magistrate would trouble himself with its execution: the seed was however sown, but its fruits were probably unforeseen or not exactly estimated; it was a snake that only slept to be again awakened and with augmented venom endanger the whole community *.

It has been shown that the acquisition of Genoa necessarily involved Milan in a war with Venice, and that the latter with her usual activity lost no time about strengthening herself: with great perseverance she succeeded in organising a league of the Lombard princes against Visconti, first by reconciling them to each other and then uniting them in common hostility to the prelate. Padua Ferrara Mantua and Verona were thus combined, nor were the ties of relationship in the Scala family any serious obstacle; for Visconti seeing that the papal forces would be long and fully employed in reducing the ecclesiastical cities and therefore unlikely to give him any annoyance, had in various ways been carrying forward his own plans of encroachment on the territories of his eastern neighbours. Each of these princes being individually weak was afraid to assert his independence, lest he should be singly overwhelmed by the weight of Milanese power, yet so reciprocally inimical that no general union could long bind them unless rivetted by common and imminent danger, or the weight of a superior power.

The indefatigable exertions of Venice at length overcame every difficulty and a league was concluded in December 1353 by virtue of which four thousand men-at-arms were banded

* S. Ammirato, Lib. xi., p. 566.—Macchiavelli, Lib. iii.

against Visconti in the following spring; and all the confederates subsequently joined Venice in her fruitless endeavours to draw Florence into the league, as already narrated. On this refusal the allies addressed themselves to Charles IV. and taking the recent Florentine treaty as a basis adopted all its provisions with some additional offers if he would immediately join them in arms against the Archbishop of Milan. But the only objects of Charles were money and a public coronation; he cared little for Italians and less for their quarrels; and treated indiscriminately, yet secretly, with the league and its adversaries, so that by exciting everybody's expectation he artfully hoped to remove those obstacles which often impeded the visits of his predecessor's to Rome. The Florentines having so recently invited him could scarcely object to his presence, but had despatched Boccaccio as their ambassador to learn in what light this visit was considered at the court of Avignon: Charles had however already obtained the pontifical sanction under certain conditions, amongst others not to remain a day in Rome after his coronation nor to enter it before: he kept his word; but it was considered as a virtual resignation of imperial sovereignty over the ancient capital, and excited the indignation of Petrarca in common with the German barons and princes, and even of the Romans themselves. "The successor of Saint Peter," exclaims Petrarch; "the successor of Saint Peter who wears his tiara on the banks of the Rhone with the same confidence as he would on those of the Tiber, not only permits the emperor to leave Rome but even orders him to do so. In other words, he allows him to assume the imperial title, and forbids him to exercise its functions. With one hand he opens to him the temple where the imperial crown is to be received, and with the other he shuts the gates of that city which is the capital and seat of empire. What a contradiction*!" Charles's

* See Petrarca's Letters, in De Sade, Mem. vol. iii., p. 402.

arrival at Udine in October 1354 with only three hundred unarmed followers showed that his object was not immediate war while it convinced all those states with whom he had negotiated of his false untrusty character*. At Padua and Mantua he was honourably received, and acting as a peace-maker procured the immediate dismissal of Count Lando and his lawless followers who instantly descended like a swarm of locusts on Ravenna and then on Naples; but he failed in permanently reconciling the belligerents in consequence of a victory gained by Genoa over Venice at Porto Longo, which rendered the Visconti intractable. A truce of several months was however agreed to; and this allowed time for Charles's assumption of the iron crown of Italy which took place at Milan in January 1355†. During these hostilities the principal Guelphs of Bologna failed in an attempt to expel Giovanni d' Oleggio and join the league, and were therefore punished as traitors; nevertheless the confederates had otherwise prepared for vigorous action when a sudden but momentary suspension of hostilities was caused by the Archbishop of Milan's death on the fifth of October 1354.

His dominions were divided between the sons of Stefano Visconti who with separate and independent portions were coequal in the general sovereignty Milan being the centre of government and Genoa common to all. Matteo the eldest brother, who had Parma Placentia Lodi Bobbio and Bologna, loved his ease and enjoyment and took only a ceremonious and nominal part in public affairs. To Bernabò fell all military business with Crema, Cremona, Brescia and Bergamo, while Galeazzo along with the interior administration ruled Como Novara Vercelli Asti Tortona and Alexandria‡.

Such was the state of Lombardy; and Florence uneasy at

* M. Villani, Lib. iv., cap. xxvii.
† M. Villani, Lib. iv., cap. xxvii. and xxix.
‡ M. Villani, Lib. iv., cap. xxv., xxviii. — Poggio Bracciolini, Ist. di Firenze, Lib. i°, xx.

the imperial presence created a board of sixteen citizens to inspect her fortified places, arrange for the collecting of cattle and all moveable property into fenced towns, muster the native military strength, break up the roads, and make every preparation for an obstinate defence of the country. Sixteen other citizens presided by the Bishop of Florence subsequently received full powers to conclude a truce or peace for any period not exceeding one year, and three hundred men-at-arms were embodied in the city with an annual salary of 100 florins each, and the privilege of not being compelled to serve out of Florence except in fortified places.

But far from wishing to quarrel with Charles, the Florentines only endeavoured to unite in one single embassy those of Siena Perugia and Arezzo, and thus derive more consequence as a confederacy than could possibly accrue from any separate missions however imposing: Pistoia Volterra San Miniato and the Guelphic Counts Guidi were then ordered to send in deputies and promptly declare their sentiments towards Florence; for government deemed it not improbable that the imperial presence would rouse up dormant feelings and interests, and under the shadow of its supreme authority, which still commanded a sort of mystic reverence strongly tinctured with dread, create a spirit and notions of independence in her subject states that perhaps might be troublesome.

Like malignant planets, the German emperors, even when unsupported by troops, carried with them in their periodical visits a perpetually disturbing force that affected every Italian community but more espécially the Guelphic republics. The Ghibelines fell naturally towards their acknowledged chief, but generally suffered by the contact; while the Guelphs could rarely withstand unarmed the shock of those old and still reviving claims that considered existing governments rather as imperial vicars than independent sovereignties.

The theoretical and often the practical suspension of poli-

tical authority followed as a matter of course in the presence of their superior, and these high-reaching prerogatives were advocated by men who really wished well to Italy. Cola di Rienzo as we have seen, and an abler patriot than he, the poet Petrarca both held such sentiments but as proceeding from the people, and there were those also who considered that the ancient emperors owed their power entirely to Roman citizens and that they therefore held only a delegated authority over the latter, subject even to be elected and deposed at their pleasure; wherefore, argues Matteo Villani, as the Florentines were early admitted to the rights of Roman citizenship they still retained their pristine independence and were not amenable to, but had a right to treat on equal terms with the Cæsars.

Italy he describes as being then irregularly divided into two distinct parties one of which adhering to the church was composed of Guelphs, or as he calls them, "*Defenders of the Faith;*" the others attached to the reigning emperor whatever might be his temporal conduct as regarded the church; and these were the Ghibelines or according to Villani "*Leaders of Battles,*" for they prided themselves on the imperial name and countenance and were keen promoters of disturbances and war. In their visits to Italy the emperors generally favoured the latter, and left many Ghibeline vicars in various cities who at their master's death assumed an independent authority, destroyed public liberty, became absolute lords, tyrants, and deadly foes to the opposite party which still preserved its freedom and remained faithful to the church; and the danger of such examples this author adduces as another reason against unconditional submission to imperial authority.

These political inroads from the north never failed to generate disorders and confusion, venal justice; or injustice, as the case might be, contentions, of which the emperors naturally became arbiters; and a barter of favours by which they rarely failed to make the most of their own passing authority:

such at least was the opinion of Florence and she therefore tried hard but vainly to force her Guelphic neighbours into a common declaration of their own independence.

Charles, attended only by his three hundred unarmed followers, was not disposed to tarry unnecessarily amidst the numerous squadrons of Milan which, being already assembled for the war, were artfully paraded in successive rounds to give him a false impression of the strength and numbers of the three Visconti. He hastened on towards Pisa, yet was crossed at every turn by fresh bands of armed men haunting him like evil spirits, until he had passed the Milanese border; his sudden arrival there in the middle of January startled the Florentines, who however prepared an embassy in conjunction with Siena and Arezzo (for Perugia as an ecclesiastical city chose singly to assert her freedom) which attired in costly garments, all of the same fashion, proceeded in state to Pisa and on the thirtieth of January were admitted to an audience. A.D. 1355.

They entered the presence-chamber dressed in scarlet robes lined with miniver, and superbly adorned; but the Senese who had already taken another line of policy, objected to Arezzo's forming part of the embassy: they wished to leave the Florentines alone and conspicuous, in order to render the contrast more striking between their own studied adulation and the others' blunt demands and rough expressions of independence. The Florentine ambassadors began their oration with due decorum but marked independence; they addressed Charles as "*The most Serene Prince*," spoke with reverence of the "*Sacred Crown*," but avoided giving him directly the title of emperor. They congratulated him on his arrival, professed a sort of vague devotion to his person with general offers of assistance, but nothing obligatory; and excused their tardy mission by the extreme difficulty of ever coming to prompt resolutions in a republic. They then professed an entire confidence in his intentions and requested some gracious expression of peace and

amity to satisfy their fellow-citizens. Every approaching shadow of subjection was studiously avoided, and to such a degree, that coupled with their bold demands and native rudeness; which clung to them longer than their liberty; so much offence was given as to excite a general indignation, and some rough treatment would have followed had not the archbishop of Prague, the vice-chancellor, and even the emperor himself interfered to protect them.

It was not the interest of Charles to quarrel with Florence: she was too rich to neglect, too stubborn to subdue, and too powerful to offend with impunity; wherefore deferring the consideration of particulars to a future day he turned away abruptly to hear the Senese ambassadors; and while negligently peeling a willow wand as was his custom, and throwing his eyes round on the company as though he were paying no attention to the orators, not a word of their discourse escaped him. So fair an occasion was not to be neglected by the Senese, who accordingly endeavoured to ingratiate themselves in a flattering speech where the imperial title was frequently and artfully introduced; but they finally astounded the Florentines by actually offering the absolute lordship of Siena without reserve or condition to the emperor. This was a political device of the ruling faction which was then inimical to Florence and the ambassadors of Volterra, San Miniato, and even Pistoia, imitated their dangerous example; Arezzo would have then followed had not the Florentines with great difficulty prevented it, but pushing their officiousness still further and attempting to speak also for Pistoia and Arezzo, Charles sharply stopped them with the remark that the ambassadors were not children and could plead for themselves*.

Fifty thousand florins were subsequently offered for the

* M. Villani, Lib. iv., cap. liii., liv.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xi., p. 569.—Sismondi, vol. iv., cap. xliii. — Sardo, Cronaca Pisana, from cap. lxxxv. to xcviii. — Roncioni, Istorie Pisane, p. 482.

imperial confirmation of all rights and privileges asserted by Florence, yet the sagacious monarch held back with apparent indifference until the amount was doubled, but with extreme difficulty, by the Florentine councils; for the citizens were averse to yielding even in empty form, much more to buying at such a price the unacknowledged pretensions of the emperor. Nor was this difficulty all on one side; for Charles was also tenacious of imagined prerogatives, so that the negotiations, carried on by him in person with some heat, were intemperately broken off late at night and new instructions demanded from the seignory. A sudden ebullition of temper however and a night's sleep brought calmer notions, and the proposed conditions were accepted and ratified on the following morning by this wary emperor. They were the repeal of every sentence and condemnation that had ever been pronounced by his predecessors against the city and community of Florence the Counts Guido of Battifolli, or those of Doadola, Mangona and Vernia: that the Florentine city, county, and district should be ruled as heretofore by their own municipal laws and statutes, all of which both present and future if not incompatible with international rights he solemnly confirmed, and moreover declared the actual gonfalonier and priors of the arts with all their successors to be during his lifetime *ex officio* imperial vicars: he also promised not to enter the capital or territory, or any fortified town belonging to the Florentine republic; after which a sort of homage or at least a public act of obeisance and submission was performed in the name of that commonwealth; which then, but not until then, acknowledged him as emperor. And for all these considerations, which were a mere sacrifice of words unbinding on his successors, he was to receive, besides the 100,000 florins, an annuity of 4000 ducats for life: these conditions were confirmed by Charles at Siena on payment of the first instalment, and again as emperor at Pietra Santa after his coronation, when 60,000 florins of the debt were liquidated.

Florence being thus replaced on the list of imperial cities became again a part of the empire and entitled to its protection; but with a nominal loss of independence that struck sorely on national pride; and the harder from its costliness. The council of the people was assembled on the twelfth of March to sanction this covenant; but when Piero di Griffo, notary of the reformations, began to read it, either from real emotion, or as some supposed, to gain popularity by good acting, he burst into tears and could no longer continue the lecture: an adjournment of the assembly took place, but even when it met on the following day, and notwithstanding that this unpopular motion had gone through all the other councils, it was rejected seven times successively by that of the people: nor was it until many influential citizens severally demonstrated the advantages that would be gained and the dangers incurred by its rejection that the question was reluctantly suffered to pass: on the twenty-first of March Charles made it known to the Pisan parliament and two days after it was formally published at Florence but without any signs of public satisfaction, or even a common attendance of citizens: the few that did assist walked sullenly home with marked disapprobation of so costly although nominal a loss of national freedom and semi-coercive acknowledgment of imperial supremacy *.

This important treaty being finished Charles entered Siena on the twenty-fourth of March with his retinue augmented by the Empress and four thousand German cavalry; by the various Ghibeline chiefs of Tuscany; and to the general surprise, by a detachment from Florence the constant and implacable foe of every emperor, but especially those of Luxembourg.

Siena for about seventy years had been ruled by the chiefs of a small but powerful oligarchy called the "*Monte*" or "*Ordine de' Nove.*" It was originally composed of the most popular Guelphic leaders and determined enemies of the aristocracy,

* M. Villani, Lib. iv., cap. lxx., lxxv.

which as at Florence was excluded from any part in the government: the administration was held by nine plebeian magistrates chosen by the council of the people from a general yearly purse at a single election, after the Florentine manner for the supply of future seignories. By the selfish working of ambition and dishonest political artifice the supreme power without varying its form or mode of acquirement was gradually stolen from the people's hands and placed in those of an oligarchy of ninety individuals who were closely banded for this purpose. Hated by the nobles and excluded citizens, but favoured by three Neapolitan monarchs they contrived to preserve their power; yet aware of their own unpopularity which haply might have been more intense than merited, their exterior politics after King Robert's death were marked by weakness or insincerity and an increasing jealousy of Florence. Fearful of external shocks on the mind of an angry people they followed Perugia's example and not only bought off the Chevalier de Montreal at their ally's expense but rather assisted him in his subsequent operations against Florence and Arezzo. Alarmed at this moment lest an exasperated population should fly to the emperor for support and expel them from power, they resolved to be beforehand and rashly sacrificed their country's freedom to the selfishness of faction *.

But the emperor's object was gain; not the support of a weak government or any abstract political question: tyranny and liberty were equally indifferent to him except as convenient instruments of self-aggrandisement: he soon saw that all real power and the riches of Siena were in a combined mass of exasperated citizens and nobles, and promptly gave them his countenance. Loud shouts of "*Long live the Emperor*," "*Death to the Nine*:" tumults and universal confusion were the ready

* M. Villani, Lib. iv., cap. lxi.—Orl. Malavolti, Storia di Siena, Parte ii^a, Lib. vi., p. 111.—Sismondi, vol. iv., cap. xliii.—Sardo Cronaca, Pisana, cap. xciv.

answer to this grace. The seignory were soon besieged in the palace, their houses ransacked, the streets barricaded, plunder and conflagration everywhere abroad, and civil war raged in all its usual violence, when Charles seizing this crisis, occupied the beleaguered palace, dissolved the obnoxious government and destroyed its acts, along with every charter he had ever granted to the seignory: he barely saved their lives from popular fury but let their property be plundered and even their friends be murdered while trying to escape: every decree against them was approved and their power annihilated, but especial care was taken by Charles to have his own lordship, which he held only on their authority, confirmed by every order of the state. After organising a provisional government under his natural brother the archbishop of Prague who was also patriarch of Aquileia, Charles resumed his march towards Rome on the fourth day after his arrival at Siena, and was immediately crowned; but true to his promise he instantly quitted that capital, returned on the nineteenth of April to a city still reeling from the shock of his former visit, and after establishing his brother as imperial vicar and chief of the new government, retired to Pisa where fresh troubles awaited him *.

But the Senese felt no benefit from a revolution that only changed men, not measures, and were forthwith in new agitation; another revolution flared up as suddenly as the first and was equally fatal to the existing government: the patriarch was quickly deposed and his life in jeopardy: Charles could not aid him, for both Lucca and Pisa were then in confusion and most of his Germans departed; but he renounced every recently acquired right over the state, and promised never to meddle with its government provided that his brother were restored in safety. On these conditions the patriarch was dismissed, and

* M. Villani, Lib. iv., cap. lxxxi., lxxxii; Lib. v., cap. xiii., xiv.—Orl. Malavolti, Parte ii^a, Lib. vi., p. 112. —Sismondi, vol. iv., cap. xliii.—Sardo, Cronaca Pisana, cap. c., cii., ciii.

thus Siena regained her independence at a far less cost than Florence paid for the nominal confirmation of hers*.

It has already been said that the German emperors in their periodical revolutions through the political system of Italy carried along with them, like erratic stars, certain disturbing forces which more or less unsettled every community that floated within the sphere of their influence: a perturbing atmosphere always accompanied their progress and was now in full action both at Pisa and in the subdued and suffering Lucca. Charles of Luxembourg had made himself extremely popular while he governed the latter for his father John of Bohemia, and the Lucchese merchants now offered him immense sums to emancipate their country from Pisan bondage. These negotiations soon became known and excited great indignation at Pisa, while the occupation of the Lucchese citadel by a German garrison, the removal of warlike stores, and other symptoms of agitation accompanied by a sudden fire which destroyed the palace of the Pisan government, awakened the alarm and united the factions of that state. The Bergolini and Raspanti were attracted by a common patriotic spirit into momentary union, and a sudden flame burst forth: the Raspanti first flew to arms and attacked the imperialists, nay even besieged Charles in the cathedral where he lodged after the conflagration. The crisis became alarming when Count Paffetta of Monte-Scudaio, one of the imperial followers and a Pisan exile of the Raspanti faction and Gherardesca race, ran out amongst his partisans and persuaded them to separate from the Bergolini; then putting himself at their head offered his services to the emperor. Charles had originally received 60,000 florins in the name of the Pisan community on condition of maintaining its dominion over Lucca with the ascendancy of the Bergolini faction and Gambacorti family in the national government; but on his first arrival the Raspanti with Paffetta at their head raised a sedition

* M. Villani, Lib. iv., cap. xx., xxii., xxix., xxxv., xxxvi.

against the opposite party, and Gambacorta in a moment of alarm resigned his authority into the emperor's hands: cooler thoughts brought wiser counsels; the magistrates struck by the folly of both factions endeavoured to reconcile them, and apparently succeeded; Gambacorta appears to have been sincere, Paffetta not; but enjoying the imperial favour and probably acting in concert with Charles, he joined with Gambacorta in a respectful demand for the restitution of powers that had only been resigned in a moment of fearful excitement. The emperor being just then without troops relinquished what he could not keep and restored the popular government: this of course dislodged the Gambacorti; left the road open for Paffetta, and saved Charles from the appearance of a direct breach of his promise in pledging himself so solemnly to uphold that family.

The second tumult was more serious for the Gambacorti, whose leading members were instantly arrested, the insurgents dispersed and five Bergolini chiefs thrown into prison: but Lucca was on the alert; she seized the favourable moment and rapidly organised both town and country for revolt. The intelligence of this movement was communicated by beacon-fires to Pisa where the factions again united for common good and instantly marched on that rebellious capital which they reduced to a new and more rigorous bondage than before. Thus baffled in his views on Lucca Pisa and Siena, Charles, as it is said on the suggestion of Paffetta, pounced on the unhappy Gambacorti who were entirely innocent, they having taken no part in the recent disturbance: they were immediately examined; first without, then with torture; but perceiving death inevitable resolved to spare themselves further agony by confessing everything that they were charged with. Three chiefs of this illustrious race and four of their principal friends thus perished ignominiously upon the scaffold *.

* Cronica di Don. Velluti, p. 96.—M. Villani, Lib. v., cap. from xxix. to xxxiv., and xxxvii.—Tronci, Annali Pisani.—Sismondi, vol. iv., cap. xliii.

After so bloody an example of royal ingratitude to a family who had proved themselves his first and warmest friends in Tuscany, and not deeming himself secure in Pisa even with all the Raspanti at his back, Charles departed on the twenty-seventh of May for Pietra Santa and afterwards for Germany, passing through the Milanese states not only without honour but suspiciously watched and guarded as a public enemy.

All his Italian influence vanished with him; he gained no credit, established no interest, acquired no power, and the imperial dignity was heedlessly lowered by his conduct: but he carried back into Germany the vain title of emperor with well-filled coffers of Italian gold; and cared for little else, beyond the confines of Bohemia *.

The Gambacorti were merchants and ancient citizens of Pisa who after the Gherardeschi's expulsion had been pushed up to greatness by public confidence and natural force of character rather than by any decided act of usurpation; their loss was therefore considered to be a national misfortune, for they had maintained peace, executed justice, paid the public debts, and increased the power, commerce, and resources of their country, and do not seem to have been tyrants; a rare occurrence in those days. Florence regretted them, for she also had found the benefit of their friendship and she saw every casual seed of quarrel most sedulously extirpated by the vigilance of their tranquillising sway: it was by their influence that Charles was admitted into Pisa; in their palace and principally at their cost was he magnificently lodged and entertained, and they remained faithful to him throughout; but when too late were fatally convinced of the proverbial folly of putting their trust in princes †.

—Sardo, Cronaca Pisana, cap. cviii. to cxi. Roncioni, Istor. Pisan., pp. 828 to 837.

* Roncioni, Istor. Pisan., p. 837.—M. Villani, Lib. v., cap. liv. — See Petrarca's Letter in De Sade, Mem. vol. iii., Lib. iv., p. 411.—Sismondi, vol. iv., cap. xliii.—Sardo, Cron. Pisa, cap. cxii.

† M. Villani, Lib. v., cap. xxxviii.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xi., p. 575.

Some new laws terminated this eventful year at Florence: one amongst others was rendered necessary by the discovery that all the late negotiations, although secret deliberations of government, had been divulged and reported to the emperor, who thus became acquainted with every hidden fear, doubt, or difficulty that arose in the Florentine councils. An act was therefore passed which besides pecuniary fines inflicted a perpetual deprivation of office on any citizen who should thus betray his country's secrets; a decree more calculated to increase circumspection than improve patriotism, which flows from a higher source.

About the same period a necessity arose for the promulgation of new laws to protect individuals against the still arrogant and overbearing aristocracy, amongst whom it would appear as if homicide, cutting and maiming, and forcible occupation of other people's property, were still of frequent recurrence. Any of the ancient nobles who after this period should be convicted of these and similar crimes were forbidden to reside in the same quarter of the city with the rest of their family; or if inhabitants of the country, they were in like manner prohibited from living in the same Pieviere or ecclesiastical union of parishes; a penalty being also attached to any aid afforded them by relations; and as many powerless individuals of humble life, such as widows and orphans, had their little property so much damaged by reckless nobles as to render its cultivation useless to the great injury of both owners and public, a law was promulgated which declared that all such property should be thereafter hired on lease by the community or Pieviere in which it happened to be, or by the relations of those who had done the mischief. So careful were the Florentines of individual rights and civil liberty whenever they involved a more rigorous legislation against the detested nobility. About this time also we have the first indications of an incipient attempt to register real property in Florence. It arose from

the difficulty of seizing such property in lieu of debt; for the dwellings shops magazines warehouses and workshops of individuals were so interlaced and confounded amidst the numerous small streets and alleys that few creditors could ascertain the exact bounds of a debtor's possessions; more especially when any of his immediate neighbours fraudulently claimed the premises to prevent seizure. For these reasons some patriotic citizens imagined that they could confer a public benefit on the state by diminishing all this trouble and uncertainty; and therefore petitioned the Seignory for the immediate formation of public registers where a description of all real Florentine property within the capital and contado should be inserted quarter by quarter in the city, and parish by parish in the country under the name of each proprietor. The older and more experienced citizens declared its impossibility; nevertheless the decree passed but failed in its execution; for although a description of each person's property and its boundaries under heavy penalties was ordered to be made by every proprietor, and superintended by the ruler of each parish, the rapid and continual changes in a purely commercial and manufacturing community rendered this almost impossible; being accompanied, as asserted, by other and graver difficulties; so that after much trouble expenditure and perseverance for several years, the project was relinquished as impracticable *.

The notoriety of Count Lando's aggressions and his known intention to pass from Puglia through the Abruzzi into the March of Ancona with an ultimate view to Tuscany, startled the Florentines into more efficient measures of defence. Pisa Perugia and Volterra united with her, but Siena refused from an angry feeling against Perugia who had favoured a recent revolt of Montepulciano and the Cavalieri's restoration there: more imminent danger subsequently overcame anger and she too joined the confederacy with a fresh and friendly feeling towards

A.D. 1356.

* M. Villani, Lib. v., cap. lxxiv.

Florence, while Pisa on the contrary, after Gambacorta's death had resumed all her ancient enmity. This broke forth at every opportunity; the small town of Sovrana was filched from her by some Ghibeline exiles for and at the instigation of Pisa; but avoiding an open quarrel the Florentines retaliated with like weapons: after having recovered the place and worried some Pisan troops on their march to Sambuca an indirect and petty warfare was maintained by means of third parties, the principals holding back and maintaining peace unbroken. Paffetta had died, perhaps was poisoned, in prison and gained nothing but odium from Gambacorta's death; but this hostile spirit gathered new force; the ancient rights of Florentine commerce in Pisa and its port at the Arno's mouth were abruptly abolished; yet these having been solemnly guaranteed by treaty the measure was declared to be an act of public safety and done by imperial command: Charles not only denied this but instantly ordered the grievance to be removed; the Pisans were obstinate, and the Florentine merchants paid the duty, but at the same time resolved, without breaking the peace, to suffer no repetition of such an injury. To this end a new magistracy called the "Dieci del Mare" or Ten of the Sea was instantly created with ample powers to abate the nuisance: eight popolani and two nobles composed this council which gave immediate orders for the withdrawal of all merchandise from Pisa within a given period, and commenced a negotiation for the immediate formation of a port at Talamone in the Maremma; for the erection of storehouses fortifications and inns, the establishment of guards, of commercial roads, and every other convenient means of communication. The port duties were settled at a constant annual sum of 7000 florins; the contract signed for ten years and material assistance given on the part of Siena by a voluntary prohibition of all land traffic between that city and Pisa. These operations were carried on with such amazing rapidity that the Pisans very soon beheld their port and city

abandoned by ships and merchants ; their dwellings emptying, their inns deserted; their roads unfrequented, and their markets unprovided. The Florentines saw their advantage and were inflexible: by the first of November not a single bale of foreign goods remained in Pisa while a general feeling of satisfaction pervaded Florence at having thus "*sgarato*" or broken their stubborn adversary *.

The death of that extraordinary old Ghibeline chief Piero Saccone of Pietramala, relieved Florence from any further apprehension from the sudden outbreaks of his unmitigated energy even up to his ninety-sixth year! A formidable soldier; but rather as a partisan than a leader; rapid bold and wily in his movements, and devoted to war, he carried these habits with a singular constancy to the very point of death. Calling his son to the bed side: "*Marco*," said he, "*the Ubertini will naturally suppose that you are at this moment only thinking of your dying father, and they will be negligent. Now go thou without delay collect our retainers and surprise Gressa ere the bishop can have any suspicion.*" Marco obeyed but was repulsed, and the old soldier expired leaving his successor the legacy of a war with the Bishop of Arezzo and the Ubertini.

Count Lando had by this time entered La Marca and already threatened Tuscany; and this compelled Florence to new-organise her native military bands; for having been once deceived she would no longer trust to the uncertain faith of a confederacy; four thousand cross-bowmen were accordingly called into service and a detachment of civic cavalry ordered to occupy the mountain passes of the Mugello, while messengers were despatched to amuse Lando with false negotiations until all the cattle and provisions had been placed in safety: the crossbow and iron cuirass of every bowman was supplied at the

* *Sgarare* is to break a stubborn child.—Cronaca di Donato Velluti, p. 96, et seq.

public expense: four times a year there was to be a general review on certain times and places; the Florentine cross-bowmen amounted to eight hundred commanded by four chiefs, one for each quarter: to every constable or commander of twenty-five was given a standard and a finely-wrought bow as a prize for the most accurate shot. When unemployed they were allowed a salary of twenty soldi a month, the constable double that sum; and when on service three golden florins. This resolute aspect saved Tuscany from an immediate visit and Count Lando passed forward into Lombardy.

In Pisa the bad effects of their folly became daily more apparent to the citizens, but only nettled without inducing them to act more wisely: Florence had not only removed her own trade but had also stopped that of Pistoia with both Lucca and Pisa and compensated it by complete freedom of commercial intercourse with herself: in revenge an attempt was made to capture the town of Uzàno; but still immovable, Florence only increased her vigilance: yet these were all acts of the ruling faction in Pisa, for commercial people suffered too intensely by this revolution not to wish for a better understanding. The Pisan government aware of this, tried hard to provoke Florence to a war; which if once begun they trusted to national antipathy for its stubborn prosecution: in pursuance of this plan they entered into a league with Genoa, hoping by the aid of her galleys to worry the Talamone traders so much as to ruin that enterprise and even succeeded in persuading Genoa that the Florentines secretly desired this, but declined appearing publicly in the transaction which would be a breach of their treaty with Siena: Florentine ambassadors were immediately sent to undeceive that state but owing to the Doge Boccanegra's partiality for Pisa they were refused an audience and nothing was effected. To provoke Florence still more the subjection of Lucca was forcibly prolonged for twenty years in direct breach of the treaty; yet no further notice was taken by the former than a decree which made it penal for any

A.D. 1357.

citizen, or even the Seignory itself, to counsel or in any way advocate a resumption of their commercial relations with Pisa; and to oppose Genoa a squadron of Provençal galleys was taken into the Florentine service.

Nor was this the only danger, Count Lando paid by Visconti was sent again into Romagna to assist Ordilaffi captain of Forlì against the pope's legate, and Florence reasonably feared that the next step would be into Tuscany: an attempt to mediate between the belligerents failed, and the great company being in a part of the Bolognese state whence in a single day they could cross the Apennines and occupy the Mugello by an open pass called "*Labia dello Stale*" no time could be lost. The Ubaldini were immediately invited to join in the defence of their country and promptly answered the call, so that in a short time nine hundred horse and six thousand foot, besides fifteen hundred vassals of that powerful family took post on the frontier and entrenched a mile and a half of the pass which was further strengthened by a massive stockade of whole forest-trees: they then pitched their camp within this inclosure and waited the event.

Count Lando, whose only object was plunder, being alarmed at so bold an attitude continued his march and encamped at Villa Franca, four miles from the beleaguered city of Forlì; and Albornoz no less frightened at this formidable reënforcement of Ordilaffi's power, despatched the Bishop of Narni to Florence for assistance. This prelate immediately published a crusade against the enemy and excited that strong religious enthusiasm which generally characterised the Florentines; he collected 30,000 florins in private contributions, principally from women and poor people; recommended that every twelve citizens should support a man-at-arms; succeeded with amazing rapidity in the accomplishment of all his objects, and soon despatched eight hundred cross-bowmen and seven hundred Barbute under Manno Donati to the camp, besides two hundred cavalry and two thousand footmen who volunteered to serve

at their own expense. Such was spiritual power! No less than 100,000 florins were expended privately and publicly on this occasion, and in return the whole community received full pardon for all their sins; so keen indeed was this spirit that a Florentine ambassador was expressly sent to urge upon Albornoz an immediate battle with the promise of 20,000 additional florins for his troops if victorious. The cooler policy of government throughout this enthusiastic proceeding was no doubt the annihilation of Lando and his company, but it was admirably seconded by the religious zeal of the inhabitants, and shows the rapid and powerful effects of church influence when artfully applied to the superstition or prejudices of a nation.

Nevertheless Albornoz was cautious in his proceedings, for feeling himself superior to Ordilaffi alone and being well supplied with money he preferred buying off Count Lando at the expense of 30,000 florins and sending him back to Lombardy under an engagement to leave Florence, Pisa, Siena, and Perugia unmolested for three years: this was not a disinterested bargain, for all these states were engaged without their consent to pay a share of the contribution. Florence with that usual heedlessness of expense so characteristic of a flourishing commercial people, had the weakness to consent, but the others plumply refused, and ridiculed the notion of a stranger's disposing of their money without even consulting them on the subject: Lando however retired; the siege of Forlì continued; and Cardinal Albornoz being almost immediately superseded by the Abbot of Clugny returned through Florence to Avignon.

Florence was now in profound peace both within and without, for the altercation with Pisa caused no sensible interruption; but so unusual a state could not be expected to last in that turbulent city: from the effects of the "*Divieto*" or prohibition against any two of the same family accepting office together, or within a specified period after having been once

elected, the Florentine government had gradually changed hands: the old families had become extremely numerous in their kindred, from antiquity and continual intermarriages, and therefore the whole chain of connexions was disturbed by the attachment of a single link to the public honours of the state.

The newly-risen families on the contrary scarcely knew their own grandfathers, and often differed even in name from their nearest relatives: the ambition of the former was therefore continually baffled by the "*Divieto*," that of the latter never, and the government by degrees fell almost entirely into the hands of new, inexperienced and generally ignorant men: this was a fair subject of complaint for those ancient Guelphic families whose ancestors had established the constitution and liberties of Florence. Men of slender connexion and members of the minor trades now returned frequently to office but the great popolani families seldom: at the periodical scrutinies for replenishing the election-purses, notwithstanding every precaution much trick, bribery, treating, and other influences were successfully employed; wherefore because the more scrupulously honest disdained these demoralising courses, the higher public offices gradually fell into the hands of men of less sentiment and coarser character.

They were not however exclusively wedded to any great faction; they understood the practical interest of their class; they worked alone; and their highest ambition was legitimate power, not the subjugation of their country: moreover they were as yet too timid, too new in office to commit great crimes; on the contrary, faction was curbed, the citizens were more united and the public good more disinterestedly studied under the influence of their administration. The great evil was corruption of the periodical scrutiny, an act however not attributable to them alone; and as few of these citizens had any acknowledged ancestors or public notoriety in national affairs, they were open to the charge of family Ghibelinism or any

other stigma that for the moment might suit their enemies to cast upon them.

Certain great families angry at their own exclusion availed themselves of this circumstance; they raised a cry that government was become exclusively Ghibeline, and that if the Captains of Party did not interfere, their own power which was the support of Italian liberty would be utterly annihilated. Nor was it untrue that a Guelphic ascendancy formed the safeguard of liberty as the enemy of all Italian tyrants; for if a Guelphic citizen usurped his country's freedom and trampled on his fellow-citizens, he straightway joined the Ghibeline despots and their party, and generally maintained himself by their support; but the Guelphs were rarely allied with them and always their enemies.

The ostensible object of these citizens was to abridge the Divieto and for this they gained many supporters; but their real one was illegitimate ambition and future tyranny *.

By the management of Piero degli Albizzi the law against Ghibelines which the Seignory were unwilling to execute was placed entirely in the hands of the Party Guelph, a magistracy consisting, as it did when first established, of two nobles with knightly rank and two popolani. The nobles at this epoch were Guelfo Gherardini and Geri de' Pazzi, the latter a friend of Piero degli Albizzi: the others were Tommaso Brancacci and Simone Simonetti; all, according to Matteo Villani, of infamous character. These in their real or pretended zeal to support the Guelphic interest re-proposed a modified form of the anti-Ghibeline law; to the effect that if any Ghibeline citizen or subject of Florence, or any one not really a good Guelph, had held or should in future hold a public employment, on being regularly accused and the charge proved by six respectable witnesses he should either be capitally condemned, or else fined in a certain sum, to be settled by the Seignory

* M. Villani, Lib. viii., cap. xxiv.—Sismondi, vol. v., cap. xlv.

before whom he happened to be arraigned; and even if he escaped other punishment the *accusation alone* was to be deemed sufficient to prevent his ever being appointed to a public office.

This law displeased all good citizens even of the most determined Guelphs: it was the act of a faction, but affected everybody, and yet was difficult to resist without derogating from the honour of the Party Guelph, a magistracy universally reverenced both from its antiquity and the peculiar circumstances of its creation. Those who were most suspected as Ghibelines were loudest in its praise and tried to uphold its execution until, as Villani says, the stone fell upon themselves; but the generality felt the sudden weight without any direct means of shaking it off; they felt that three of the captains could at any moment destroy all their hopes and even capitally punish them; and they also knew that the election-purses of that magistracy had been lately filled with the names of some of the most dangerous men in Florence *.

The Seignory shocked at the injustice of such a law refused to sanction it, but the captains met them by declaring their refusal to be a strong proof that they themselves were not good Guelphs; and finally succeeded by clamour, and almost an exhibition of physical force in compelling its enactment.

Simone de' Bardi, Uguccione Buondelmonte, Migliore Guadagni, and Massaiazzo Raffacani the next elected captains, all eager for power and prompt to trouble, lost no time in putting the law in execution, and a report being rife that, like the ancient triumvirate, they kept a list of the proscribed and condemned by acclamation universal terror spread through the community. Seventy citizens filled their first list; wherefore every individual began to fear himself suspected and yet was afraid to speak, because the slightest expression of alarm would be received as a proof of guilt. Nevertheless many

* M. Villani, Lib. viii., cap. xxxii.

presented the most abject petitions to the captains as if they were sovereign princes, praying not to be included in the list of suspected persons.

The latter thinking that too sudden and general an alarm would be impolitic, began with a moderate exercise of their power, knowing how much smoother the machine would roll if gradually and silently introduced; wherefore accompanied by two hundred of their own adherents they repaired to the palace and accused four obscure citizens of having exercised some trifling office in times past and admonished five others who were actually in office; but so blighting was the interdict that the families of two never enjoyed any public employment for a century after. This moderate half-concealed exercise of a tremendous power only served to show its wide extent, and increased the general gloom from its retrospective action; for opposition seemed hopeless and fear was paramount. Ten days afterwards two more citizens were condemned, nor did the family of one recover its privileges for three generations: gathering confidence as they proceeded the Capitani accused eight more and on the twenty-first of April; having in the interval increased their proscription list; four others; so that in about forty days eighteen families had been, if not capitally condemned, at least fined and disfranchised. After this the triumvirate's example was more closely followed; for altogether setting aside the proscription list each member accused whom he pleased and the others acquiesced: "*Hast thou no enemy?*" was the question amongst them. "*Consent to admonish mine and I will do the same by thine*"*.

Terror had by this time spread so widely that not only private individuals but the priors themselves, although conducting the supreme government, were fearful of opposing this tyranny: at length, as ever happens in extreme cases, a check was proposed Cino Buoncioni being gonfalonier of A.D. 1358.

* M. Villani, Lib. viii., cap. xxxi.—Mar. di Coppo Stefani, Lib. ix., Rub. 674.

justice; and accordingly on the twenty-fourth of April two more popular members were added to the board of captains making in all four of that order, three of whose votes became necessary to pass any resolution: the noble members were made eligible from any of the aristocracy under knightly rank; the contrary of which had hitherto restricted this honour to a few families; and no captain by the new regulation could be reëlected in less than a year after having last held office: a fresh scrutiny was ordered, new members chosen, the bill passed every council and became law; and thus a slight check was placed on the rapidly accelerating force of so formidable an engine *.

The magistracy of the Party Guelph as a natural consequence of the law had assumed this power of warning any suspected families, or those whom they affected to suspect of Ghibeline principles, against any future acceptance of office; and the citizens so admonished received the appellation of "*Ammoniti.*" So formidable a power backed by the privileges riches and patronage, as well as the compact organisation of this body, became a terrible instrument of faction: it was a state within a state, which with still increasing audacity indiscriminately admonished all that were privately obnoxious to it or its adherents; so that during the nine years which followed its first introduction in 1357 no less than two hundred civic families had been disfranchised; and yet instead of being, as in a really free country, crushed by the weight of public opinion, the *Capitani* were abjectly courted by every class in the commonwealth †.

The terror so deeply planted in the minds of men by this tyranny could only, says Leonardo Aretino, be discovered by their looks; for fear and danger kept every body silent and the city had changed from a place of mirth to the abode of melancholy.

* M. Villani, Lib. viii., cap. xlii.
† Leon. Aretino, Lib. viii., p. 146.—Scip. Ammirato, Lib. xi., pp. 584, 586.—M. Villani, Lib. viii., cap. xxiv., xxxi., xxxii.—Macchiavelli, Ist. Fiorentine, Lib. iii°.

Those who most courted the Capitani were Piero Albizzi, Lapo di Castiglionchio and Carlo Strozzi chiefs of the Albizzi faction, wherefore Uguccione de' Ricci had the double mortification of seeing the commonwealth ruined through his own factious spirit, and his rivals snatching away the very shaft which he had, as he thought, so adroitly launched for their destruction.

Angry and disappointed he struggled long in vain; but in 1366 on the occasion of Niccolo Monacci being admonished, Baldese Baldesi being gonfalonier and Ricci himself one of the priors; a fair occasion presented itself for opposing this evil: Monacci who had been secretary to the republic was a man of acknowledged talent, universally respected, and a thorough Guelph; so that the injustice of his accusation was too palpable to be honestly sanctioned, and the Seignory refused to entertain it. They compelled the captains to annul their accusation and even carried a resolution in full council that no suspicion should thereafter rest on the fair fame of Niccolo Monacci.

Encouraged by this success Ricci seized the occasion to impress his colleagues with the necessity of a vigorous resistance, and as the addition of two popolani in 1358 had produced some beneficial effects he now proposed to augment the Guelphic board to nine members, choosing two from the inferior trades and five popolani in order more effectually to check the nobles who were believed to be the most active and resolute upholders of this pernicious system. The proposed decree enacted that no man should even be declared a Ghibeline unless sanctioned by two-thirds of the board; and a permanent list of Guelphic citizens was formed, from which twenty-four persons were to be chosen by lot, who acting as a grand jury decided in the first instance, after hearing the accused, whether there were just grounds for proceeding to a public accusation, twenty-two votes being necessary for this preliminary decision. The bill went triumphantly through every council with general

satisfaction and for a while did good; but it was finally undermined by political artifice, and both factions maintained a hostile and menacing equality until 1371, when the Albizzi gathered fresh vigour; as will be hereafter related *.

During the early part of these transactions some Genoese galleys under Pisan influence annoyed the Florentine commerce until opposed by an antagonist squadron of ten sail from Provençe and four from Naples which soon checked their audacity and formed the first naval armament that Florence had as yet ventured to maintain. It was not long wanted; for Pisa seeing herself baffled at all points declared the trade with Talamone free to every nation, and the Florentines though still suspicious after a while dismissed all but five galleys, which they long continued to retain for commercial protection. Pisa had thus learned to her cost that she was not necessary to the existence or even the mercantile prosperity of Florence, and that neither the vast expense, nor public injuries, nor private losses, nor restricted trade, nor her own subsequent advances, nor those of others in her behalf, could shake the resolution of that republic or abate one jot of her haughty independence †. The inconvenience was assuredly great, but the moral effect was greater; and an increased self-confidence together with a conscious dignity and an incipient navy remained to support the Florentines.

A dispute between Cortona and Perugia which involved Siena in a war with the latter was maintained with such asperity as to determine the last-mentioned state to solicit Count Lando's dangerous assistance. The great company was then in Romagna and commanded in his absence by Count Broccardo and Amerigo del Cavalletto: Broccardo demanded a free passage through the Florentine territory into that of Perugia, which was peremptorily refused and the mountain passes

* Cronaca di Donato Velluti, pp. 106 to 112.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xii., p. 656.

† Matteo Villani, Lib. vii., cap. xxxii., and Lib. viii., cap. xxxvii., lxiii.

more strongly guarded in concert with the Guidi and Ubaldini. Manno Donati, Giov. de' Medici, Amerigo Cavalcanti, Simone Peruzzi and afterwards Filippo Macchiavelli were sent to insist on Broccardo's execution of the late treaty with Albornoz, by which Count Lando had engaged not to enter Tuscany for two years to come. The latter who had in the interim returned from Germany, at once disclaimed any intention of annoying Florence, and persuaded the ambassadors, with the after sanction of their government, to trace for him a route along their frontier from the Val di Lamone to Marradi; and thence by Castiglione and Biforco to Belforte; to Dicomano, Vicorata, and Bibiena; but at the same time he prudently detained them as hostages. Under their auspices Lando began his march; but on the 24th of July the adventurers plundered Castiglione and Biforco; this belonging to the Counts Guido; that to the Ubaldini family; an outrage not taken meekly even at the moment and still less so afterwards. The moody glances and half-uttered threatenings of the peasantry were unheeded; their imprecations derided; their complaints ill listened to, and worse understood; and, says Villani, the soldiers being ever as true to plunder as the magnet to iron, a desperate revenge was the consequence. Count Lando had notice of their intentions the same evening but undervaluing their skill, numbers, and equipment, fearlessly made preparations for threading the dangerous pass of "*Le Scalelle*" or the "*Traps*" on the following morning.

The road through this defile although short, was steep and difficult: it led along the bank of a torrent from Biforco to Belforte winding for nearly two miles between impending hills over a narrow rugged bottom walled in by lofty cliffs and loose misshapen rocks, and covered with stones and other obstacles: it was a dark and dangerous passage, made as it were for deception, which probably acquired for it the appropriate and impressive appellation that it bore.

Amerigo del Cavalletto with the advanced guard the baggage the camp-followers, and all the ambassadors except one; either from design or unreadiness in the peasantry, was allowed to pass unmolested; but the other divisions when well entered were unexpectedly attacked, at first by about eighty rustics and then by all the mountaineers of the district. Every slope and bush and rock was suddenly in motion; the mountain seemed to heave as if shaken by an earthquake and as it were loosening from itself, rolled down amidst thundering shouts and unutterable confusion in a mingled mass of rocks and stones and earth and trees and dust, in one promiscuous ruin; while from the top of all, unmitigated storms of slings and arrows kept showering on the victims.

Count Lando, who at the first alarm was carelessly taking some refreshment on horseback with his helmet off; now hastily replaced it and sounding to arms; instantly dismounted a hundred Hungarian cavalry and sent them scrambling along the heights to dislodge the peasantry: but these were far more numerous and securely posted; while the others, according to the fashion of their country were heavy with arms and cumbrous garments: the combat here was short and fatal, but still some escaped. Meanwhile Count Broccardo with his horse and armour, were crushed to a bloody and unseemly mass and rolled with the rock that killed him down into the torrent, where multitudes shared his destiny; strength was powerless, skill useless, arms defenceless, and courage of no avail but to teach men how to die: nothing could withstand the ruin from above; and the whole army thus suddenly ensnared, struggled with hopeless miserable death. On seeing this, the peasantry like vultures stooped fiercely from the heights and clustering round their victims prolonged the slaughter: with javelins first, and then with shorter weapons they rushed upon the foe and struck and murdered with impunity; for terror, pressure, and confusion precluded all resistance.

A vassal of Count Guido's with twelve of his comrades attacked Lando who sword in hand made a long and gallant defence but was compelled to surrender; holding his weapon by the point and seeing it accepted he ventured to remove his helmet when a peasant nearly despatched him by a treacherous blow: this was a signal for general submission or escape: the horsemen leaped from their steeds, hastily doffed their armour, and betook themselves to flight; escaping as they best could amongst the rocks and thickets of the pass, while the more ready footmen flew in every direction that promised a shadow of safety. But ere this time not only all the country-men were fighting, but the women also rushed down screaming from the hills to assist their husbands and share in the general spoil: money, arms, jewels, belts of massive silver, and other valuables, were torn from the dead and dying or wrenched in exchange for death from the fugitives with all the madness of rapacity and revenge. Three hundred knights lay slaughtered on the rocks besides a thousand war-horses and three hundred palfreys; many more were made prisoners both of horse and foot; and of those that escaped from the pass numbers were captured by loose bodies of peasantry who had taken no part in the action.

Cavalletto on hearing of this disaster hurried on in alarm to Dicomano and there entrenched himself; but this could never have availed and all would assuredly have perished if, to save themselves, the Florentine ambassadors had not restrained popular fury and in a forced march of forty-two miles led him by the pass of *Stale* into the Imolese territory. The authorities were blamed, and it surely offered a noble opportunity of sacrificing or at least risking life for the sake of their country; an occasion that only a few, and those the most exalted spirits have ever dared to embrace: the Decii would have done it, but these republicans were men of a safer temperament*.

* M. Villani, Lib. viii., cap. lxxii, Lib. xi., p. 588.—Leon. Aretino, Lib. lxxiii., lxxiv., lxxvi.—S. Ammirato, viii., p. 147.

The stragglers joined Cavalletto at Imola and he was afterwards reënforced by two thousand German cavalry who had quitted the Senese and Perugian armies to wreak their vengeance on the Florentines. But nothing daunted, Florence continued to guard her defiles and passes and simultaneously exerted herself to make peace between Siena and Perugia; this mediation succeeded and both being tired of war the conditions were left entirely to her discretion: Montepulciano was accordingly made free and independent of Siena, as Cortona was nearly so of Perugia; both cities were dissatisfied at this award, yet submitted without again breaking out into open warfare; but this happened somewhat later.

Count Lando by bribing his captors, after some adventures escaped sorely wounded to Bologna, the remnant of his freebooters having been placed in safety against all expectation, against all hope, and against all commands, by the conduct of the Florentine ambassadors. Amerigo was yet unsafe at Dicomano as Count Guido and all his vassals were still burning for revenge, the massacre of the Scalelle having only half appeased them: the baggage remained untouched; the republic had above twelve thousand men in arms immediately around him; the roads were cut and every pass was occupied; there was no escape, no safety but in the personal terror of the ambassadors for Amerigo had promised them the first death-wound in case of disaster. In Florence all was animation; more numerous councils were summoned and in full consultation on the necessary movements; there was complete unanimity; the company by its excesses had broken every compact and the only question was whether the republic was still bound to keep them.

There was always a refined theoretical feeling of right and justice alive in Florence but seldom strong enough to prevail against public or private interest: in this case opinions were divided and a middle course was taken; orders were issued not

to allow foreign soldiers to enter the Florentine territory, or furnish them with any supplies; and although hostilities were not positively directed against Amerigo by public decree yet no man was forbidden to offend him; which in the excited state of the country was unequivocal destruction. Cavalletto conscious of his danger despatched one of the ambassadors to Florence on his own behalf: his influence caused another assembly of more numerous councils in which almost every citizen that had ever held office assisted; but he could do nothing more: the ambassador pleaded in vain; the former decree was confirmed and even re-confirmed by three other councils convoked at the powerful instance of this citizen who had great weight in the commonwealth. But these solemn and repeated expressions of the national will availed nothing against the safety of the Florentine ambassadors; unlike Regulus they acted for themselves not for Florence and even disobeyed her mandates: by which, says Villani, may be imagined what audacity swelled the hearts of great citizens, and how small their reverence for their country! And justly so; he continues; for in those days the country neither rewarded merit nor punished iniquity; but private and party interest smothered all patriotic feeling and enabled them to bear any public injury with composure.

Amerigo and his companions had now scarcely three days' subsistence; numerous and angry bands kept thickening round them; the hills above Sieve bristled with Florentine spears; crossbow-men lined every eminence, the passes were retrenched, strengthened, and numerously guarded; four hundred Florentine men-at-arms under the German Broccardo were already in their saddles and destruction appeared inevitable. A feeling of compassion for his countrymen touched this chieftain's heart and overcame his loyalty: by the ambassadors' connivance he repaired secretly to Dicomano and had an interview with Amerigo which resulted in a decision, as the event proved, to conduct the company safely to Vicchio in the Florentine state

despite of the late decrees, and leave them masters of the plain of Mugello with all its abundance. No communication of this was made through their colleague to the seignory, the military commanders believed that they were to receive orders from the embassy and Broccardo amongst the rest willingly accepted the rear guard for the better defence of his countrymen.

At the sound of the Florentine trumpets which were sent forward by the captive ambassadors with great state; the roads and passes were re-opened, all impediments removed, and Amerigo was publicly escorted by a band of Florentine cross-bow-men to Vicchio: here his followers were supplied, through a second breach of orders, with the very provisions that were sent by government for the national troops, and some skirmishing even took place between Count Guido's vassals who hovered on their flanks and the Florentine escort. On beholding these unlooked-for proceedings the remaining soldiers, citizens, and peasantry, who had assembled in great numbers on the hills, were indignant and amazed, yet so far respected their country's ministers as to refrain from active violence, but loudly declared that the republic was sacrificed and denounced its unfaithful servants. After four-and-twenty hours' delay Amerigo resumed his march under the care of Manno Donati, but not without laying an ambuscade for the armed multitudes that infested him and killing many in the combat: hurrying forward under the guidance of Ghisello degli Ubaldini, an able chief, who increased the robber's alarm to clear his own territory, Amerigo with great difficulty accomplished this eventful movement.

But Florence had not yet thrown off the great company: reënforced by the Senese and Perugian bands of foreign mercenaries under Anichino Baumgarten (or Mongardo as he is called by Italian authors) they made an attempt on Faenza but were repulsed by the aid of three hundred Florentine cavalry: this and the persuasion that the disaster at Scalella was connived at by Florence, redoubled their threats and hatred

but did not diminish their fears. The Florentines being no less apprehensive, after some time wasted in legal disputes with Bologna about the possession of *Lo Stale*, ran a strong intrenchment flanked with towers across that pass for eight miles, reaching from the summit of the adjoining hill to the town of Monte-Vivagno and stationing a guard of twelve hundred heavy-armed infantry to maintain it: they then concluded a league with the legate at Faenza against every free company for two years to come, but as yet having no regular general, Pandolfo Malatesta of Rimini was invited to assume that dignity. This league availed nothing, for the Abbot of Clugny then legate proving much too unwarlike for his station, Cardinal Albornoz was again appointed who after a month of intrigues at Florence, spent in vain and interested attempts to reconcile that republic with Count Lando, quitted it not very well pleased with her firmness.

Nevertheless they were still very uneasy at the schemes and threatenings of this freebooter, but issuing a decree which forbid any subject or citizen on pain of death to serve in the Grand Company and with a more generous spirit than the cardinal's, the seignory prepared to vindicate the honour and independence of their country.

Meanwhile the ambassadors after having completed their discreditable act audaciously returned to Florence: confiding in their political influence they unblushingly vindicated their conduct and were as shamelessly absolved; they haughtily repelled any public investigation or reproof even in face of the council, and asserted with factious impudence that it was no light matter to have in so brief a period expelled this band of robbers from the country *!

Here we have an example of five powerful citizens first disobeying the orders and then braving the whole power of the

* M. Villani, Lib. viii., cap. lxxv. to lxxix.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xi., pp. 590, 147.—Leon. Aretino, Lib. viii., p. 591.

Florentine republic! But Florence was really an extensive aristocracy, not a republic; and although more free and energetic than a despotism, was equally filled with its vices though they were broken and repressed by competition. Power whether regal or democratic spoils man; but the former tends to paralyse his efficiently useful faculties while the latter admits of a more active growth of them, both for good and evil: the benefits arising from the first depend on one individual and are mortal: those of the second on the emulative working of successive minds and are eternal. In one the intellectual fire is half hidden under a bushel; in the other it expands and burns even to conflagration. Theoretically there could not be a moment's hesitation in the choice; practically we are often compelled most unwillingly to pause, and balance the respective evils: the leaden pressure of despotism is sickening; the wildfire of democracy is appalling; but the promiscuous mass of crime is perhaps proportionably equal: for human passions in whatsoever condition, unless well governed, will either smoulder or blaze, undermine or openly destroy, according to their medium of action; wherefore that form of government is surely best which tends most effectually to strengthen the moral dignity of man, and however theoretically good may be the constitution of any state, no nation will long preserve its freedom, though the forms remain; where "*pure and undefiled religion*"* and sound morality, which are nearly identical, do not form the basis of public virtue.

COTEMPORARY MONARCHS.—England: Edward III.—Scotland: David II.—France: John (the Good).—Aragon: Peter IV.—Castile and Leon: Peter the Cruel.—Portugal: Alphonso IV. to 1357, then Peter I.—German Emperor: Charles IV. of Luxemburg.—Pope: Innocent VI.—Naples: Louis and Joanna I.—Sicily: Louis to 1355, then Frederic III.—Greek Emperor: John Cantacuzene to 1355, then John Palæologus.—Turkish Empire: Orkhan, (establishes himself in Europe in 1353).—Poland: Casimir the Great.—Hungary: Louis the Great, of the house of Naples-Anjou.

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* General Epistle of Saint James, chap. i., v. 27.

CHAPTER XXIV.

FROM A.D. 1359 TO A.D. 1365.

As the public treasury of a nation is filled by the contributions, and commonly the forced contributions of all, so most think that it may be dipped into without any moral difficulty as long as they can avoid the penalties of law; and as a state of war affords more facility for the exercise of such labours, it has generally been welcomed, if not as a favourite of national rulers be they many or few, at least as a welcome coadjutor in accomplishing their own desires. On the other hand a long peace with all its permanent connexions and associations, is always a slow though necessary, and perhaps the only means of convincing existing generations of its great and lasting advantages. But war whether proceeding from internal ambition or external violence is the inevitable, though it may be the distant source of national ruin; for almost every public matter, civil, political, or religious, but more especially military, ultimately resolves itself into a question of finance: money is the alpha and omega, the mover or the object, of everything connected with the affairs of civilized man; and as its sources are finite while the wants are infinite, nothing but the most rigid frugality can prevent ultimate ruin; not the frugality of parsimony, but the enlightened ability of efficacious expenditure. Yet as economy may be in vain expected from powers that enjoy the fruits

A.D. 1359.

without the pressure of taxation, only those who bear the burden are likely to watch with any solicitude over the public expenses, and even they with a sleepy glance at its efficient appropriation: nay, they will recklessly sanction new wars, new expense and extravagance, and therefore new accumulations of debt and danger, as long as any fresh source is opened for the furtherance of their own business or inclinations. And this will ever be if a disinterested love of country is not the moving principle; and thus it was with the Florentines: the consequences of their old folly the Lucchese war, were now apparent, and fresh expenses debts and contributions became necessary. The infant navy though useful, and even requisite, was no light charge; the alteration of their whole line of commerce, though a spirited and politic act, was not accomplished for nothing; subsidies and opposition to the grand company drained large sums, and the still menaced hostilities of Count Lando with the generally disturbed aspect of Italian politics rendered additional funds indispensable. But the country was deep in debt, the revenues almost all mortgaged to pay the interest of former loans, and the people in such a state that any imposition of new taxes unsanctioned by an enemy's presence would have been insufferable and even dangerous. The public mind was moreover highly irritated by Guelphic persecutions which still continued in spite of every restraint, and which did not even allow acknowledged good citizens to remain quiet, but still dragged them from private life and condemned them as Ghibelines.

Manetto da Filicaia the new gonfalonier and his colleagues had therefore no resource but borrowing and its attendant evils: yet public credit had fallen so low that a new loan became no easy task even on ruinous conditions: nevertheless a decree went forth on the twelfth of January offering five florins interest for every hundred, with credit in the public books for thrice that sum, thus making the whole interest amount

to 15 per cent. per annum and all the privileges and immunities enjoyed by other creditors. This was the fourth "*Monte*" or public stock created since the Lucchese war and 120,000 florins were realised by the expedient at the expense of 360,000 of additional debt with its attendant interest! Nor was this from any scarcity of money in the market but a pure want of confidence in public securities, occasioned by the pernicious system of making new loans and forming new stocks on every fresh emergency *.

This was an unpromising commencement of the year at home, and the aspect of foreign affairs was scarcely less cheerless and forbidding. Before the disaster of Scalella Count Lando carried off to Germany all the plunder he had amassed in Italy; and after redeeming mortgaged lands and buying new estates he repaired to court and convinced Charles IV. that notwithstanding the decay of imperial authority in Tuscany, yet if armed with a royal warrant he would still engage at his own expense to restore it, as the province swarmed with German mercenaries all secretly or openly attached to the company. There would be small danger of battle, and a single city being once occupied all the rest he promised should be quickly brought under subjection. Thus persuaded, Charles appointed Lando his Vicar in Pisa but secretly gave him more extensive powers, and the agreement made with Siena by Count Broccardo most seasonably favoured him, so that the affair of Scalella probably saved Tuscany †.

During Lando's recovery the remnant of his company under Amerigo del Cavalletto served the captain of Forlì then besieged by the legate, and his being joined by Baumgarten and Count Luffo with about two thousand Barbute and a numerous infantry from Siena produced the attack and repulse at

* M. Villani, Lib. viii., cap. lxxi., and Lib. ix., cap. iii.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xi., p. 592.—Governo della Toscana, p. 51, and note.

† M. Villani, Lib. viii., cap. lxxiii.

Faenza: but still further augmented by Germans from almost every Italian state, these freebooters resumed their former audacity now mingled with an ardent thirst of vengeance, and "*To Florence, To Florence*" became the general cry: nevertheless failing in some attempts to force the mountain passes, they on hearing of Malatesta's appointment retired into Romagna.

After ceaseless ravages and much privation Lando was finally succoured by Giovanni d' Oleggio then Lord of Bologna, who being suspicious of the new Legate's intentions, resolved to be prepared; but a personal conference with Albornoz removed these fears and the company, still exasperated against Florence, once more resumed its wonted course of rapine. The territory of Rimini was re-plundered; Sogliano near Cesina and many more places were stormed, or otherwise taken without remorse or mercy, and Florence herself was kept in continual alarm lest they should make a descent by Faggiuola and Borgo San Sepolcro into her territory. After breathing awhile at Sogliano and leaving their sick and wounded to the people's care they again set forth, but were no sooner departed than a body of the neighbouring peasantry attacked the town, plundered the baggage and murdered the sick and wounded *.

The cold was so intense at this time that snow lay twenty feet deep in the streets of Bologna; a great hall was excavated beneath this chilly mass and an entertainment given in commemoration of so rare an event; yet in the midst of such a season these adventurers were still out in search of food and shelter but nearly dispersed and annihilated by its severity: nevertheless they worried the eastern coast of Italy and at the same time maintained a close correspondence with Albornoz who without the concurrence of Florence was for his own views still attempting to effect a reconciliation between them †.

* M. Villani, Lib. viii., cap. lxxxiii., lxxxiv., lxxxv., xciii., xcvii. civ. cv.
† M. Villani, Lib. viii., cap. cv., and Lib. ix., cap. ii., v.

No particular affection for that city moved the legate, but he calculated on the assistance of her weighty purse and lavish expenditure to rid the ecclesiastical states for a season of so formidable an obstacle to his present schemes; and the fright, folly, or reverence of the Florentines in sanctioning his former unauthorised compact encouraged such hopes. It was now otherwise, for she had nobly resolved to spend her last farthing in driving these miscreants from a country which for years had been disgracefully subjected to their yet unchastised aggressions, rather than offer the slightest tribute for the purchase of a doubtful forbearance. In the face of all this Albornoz concluded his treaty, by which he engaged on the church's part to pay Count Lando 45,000 florins and that the Florentines should disburse 80,000 more for the purchase of four years' tranquillity; and if these terms were not accepted within five days by the latter he further bound himself to forfeit 10,000 florins in addition. Albornoz felt more confident from having tampered with certain of the citizens who secretly assured him that the treaty would be ratified, as well from reverence to him and the church as from the apprehension that Florence might be left to cope single-handed with the great company.

The publication of this agreement kindled a universal flame: there were indeed some few of the worst citizens that supported it, but in general the moral courage and nobler spirit of Florence broke out in vivid brightness: the timid, selfish, and evil-minded were rebuked or awed into silence; a proud independent patriotism pervaded every rank, and this, or any other treaty with Count Lando and his myrmidons, was loudly and scornfully rejected: a report which also prevailed that Albornoz was covertly working to obtain the absolute government of Florence added force to indignation and created an universal abuse of his name and principles. Nevertheless a mission was instantly sent to detach him if possible from the

German robber and once more offer him the whole support of Florence: to this Albornoz apparently agreed, but almost simultaneously concluded a new compact with Lando by which he agreed to pay 50,000 florins to relieve the ecclesiastical states from his destructive visitations.

Thus enriched the company waxed stronger and bolder, and their spirit was high with the expectation of a golden harvest in Tuscany; their excesses now became wilder and more ferocious than ever, and not a man fell but was cruelly revenged by his relentless comrades: against Florence vindictive threatenings were reiterated with contemptuous violence, for incipient concessions led them to expect final humility and the spiritless conduct of Italy had fostered an imposing audacity which was not courage.

The intelligence of this convention amazed and exasperated the Florentines; there was an ingratitude in it that they who had done so much for the church but little expected, and their mortification was extreme: for many years they had maintained in her service from twelve to fourteen hundred of their best troops besides the private aid of various individuals both subjects and citizens; the latter within a very limited period had spent no less than 100,000 florins in aid of the church and even now it was discovered that their proffered succour was only received as a convenient auxiliary to enhance the cardinal's terms while treating with Count Lando. To this intelligence was added that Pisa, Perugia, and Siena, all equally heedless of Florence, were also in secret negotiation with the company; messengers were forthwith despatched to turn them from this false and foolish measure to a more politic and manly course, but all in vain; amicable replies were indeed received but the disgraceful negotiations continued, and the dread of these freebooters had struck so deep into the public mind that not Tuscany alone but even Lombardy was trembling.

Ditches of great extent and dimensions were there cut across

broad tracts of country, not only as a defence against them, but also to repel the expected invasion of the Duke of Austria whom Charles IV. had lately created King of Lombardy: Bologna also followed this defensive example; and the Visconti to facilitate their own war communications with the latter place constructed an elevated military road across all the plains, passing valleys and ravines by viaducts and flanked by ditches until it reached the Po; while in Tuscany to secure their communication with Cortona the Senese also made a road and bridge over the Chiana river and marshes, or more probably restored the ancient Roman way which a mass of long-neglected waters had gradually destroyed *.

All these things showed the agitated state of Italy; and it is easy even in the present day to imagine the degree of terror caused by an able military chief leading a larger army than any single state could oppose to him; unchecked by the laws of God or man, and carrying murder and desolation throughout a defenceless country! Florence was even more active than her neighbours in preparing for the shock, but with men, not works; and nothing shows her moral courage more than this resolution to stand alone against a danger that made all her most powerful neighbours tremble. Her own army which was mustered on the twenty-ninth of April 1359 consisted of two thousand Barbute each with two horses, five hundred Hungarian light horse; which since the visits of Louis had become a constant ingredient in the composition of Italian armies; and two thousand five hundred chosen crossbow-men armed with light corselets †.

As for years these robbers had been the scourge and hate of Italy, volunteers public and private poured in from every quarter to fight under the Florentine standard: Milan sent two thousand men; Naples, Padua, Ferrara; kings, tyrants and Ghibelines; all lent their aid to the democratic and

* M. Villani, Lib. ix., cap. vi. to x. † Cario, Ist. Mil., Parte iii., p. 233.

Guelphic Florence, while the free states of Tuscany her old allies and nearest neighbours refused all assistance and held disgraceful parley with the plunderers. Perugia was the first to incur this shame by a repetition of her former conduct and for now consenting to pay Count Lando 4000 florins annually during five years, to allow the company a constant free passage through her dominions, provide an abundant market for the troops, and refuse all aid to the Florentines. Siena coolly followed this example, and Pisa with enduring bitterness and more dishonesty, not only granted supplies and a free transit but covertly engaged to afford more direct assistance against Florence *.

The formidable Lando after fresh devastations in La Marca and Bologna and completing these shameful treaties; with the help of the legate's subsidy crossed the Perugian territory in the beginning of May at the head of twelve thousand men of all arms. But Florence far from shrinking, rejected every overture made from the company to extract money without fighting, as well as the friendly offers of mediation from individuals eager to save her from destruction and boldly proclaimed a reward of 5000 florins for Count Lando's head as a robber chieftain; nor could the Marquis of Monferrato whose ambassadors had already engaged the company, and who only demanded a free passage through the Florentine states for a moment alter her resolution †.

After some plundering excursions in the direction of Todi the great company made its appearance at Buonconvento towards the end of June: the standard of Florence was immediately delivered to Pandolfo Malatesta who confided it to the valour of Niccolo Tolomei a noble Senese knight attached to the Florentine service, and at the same time the banner of the Feditori was given in charge to Orlando a faithful German servant of the republic, on purpose to show the re-

* M. Villani, Lib. ix., cap. xx. † Scip. Ammirato, Lib. xi., p. 593.

gular troops of that nation how much confidence was placed in them. Malatesta was invested with unlimited powers, such as nothing but the most imminent danger could have drawn from the Florentines, and immediately took the field with about eight thousand men, while Lando showing his right flank to Siena moved round their frontier; both armies marching parallel without either of them attempting to cross the border *.

The Val di Pesa, Celle†, Montopoli and San Romano were thus successively occupied by Pandolfo, while Lando moved by Pomarance and Sacco to Pontedera on the confines of the Pisan territory and, in despite of his devastations, with a certainty of support from that state which had already despatched eight hundred Barbute to the Fosso Arnonico; ostensibly to protect her own frontier, but really to reënforce the company. A battle was expected, but fighting was not the German's object, and plundering was impossible with so keen a soldier as Malatesta on his flank: his march was resumed on the tenth of July for San Pietro in Campo in the Lucchese states; five hundred horse followed close on his track and the whole army without violating the Pisan border arrived next morning at a place called Pieve a Nievole, closing so near that only an open plain, such as would almost in those days invite armies to battle, divided the belligerents ‡.

On the 12th Count Lando who could not without disgrace avoid it, sent a pompous challenge in the fashion of the time: a torn and bloody gauntlet placed on a branch of thorn was carried to Malatesta with the sound of trumpets and a cartel of defiance, calling on the Florentine general, if he dared, to pluck

* M. Villani, Lib. ix., cap. xxviii.

† It stood three miles south-east of Peccioli, in the Val d' Era, but exists no longer. (Vide Repetti Dizionario Geograf° Fisico, Storico della Toscana, a work of extraordinary research and merit, which reflects the highest credit on its author, and through him on his country.)

‡ M. Villani, Lib. ix., cap. xxix.—Sardo, Cronaca di Pisa, cap. cxxvii.

the glove from its place and reply to the call. Pandolfo with a ready hand quietly removed it from the bough, and smiling observed, that he remembered having once beaten Count Lando at a place called "*La Frasca*" in Lombardy *: then turning to the herald he replied, "The field is fair free and level "between us; we are prepared and willing to defend it in "the name and for the honour of Florence and her just cause; "and for no other reason are we here than to prove with our "swords that her enemies are in the wrong and do much evil "without legitimate cause of war, and thus we trust in God and "hope for victory! And to him that sent this gauntlet say, "that we shall soon see whether his deeds will correspond with "his rough and fierce defiance." He then rewarded the herald with a largess of wine and gold, and commanded his own trumpeters to sound a high-toned answer to the challenger †.

Nothing further occurred until the sixteenth when both armies began to move; the company first advanced: but seeing the adversary's readiness immediately changed its order and took up a strong position on a neighbouring height called *Campo alle Mosche* where no attack could be prudently made on them: Pandolfo for some time kept waiting for the challengers on the plain, but so far from fighting they studiously avoided a battle, strengthened their new position, burned the old camp, and left their former ground to the Florentines. They were bearded in their very entrenchments by the Hungarian cavalry while Pandolfo's main body remained under arms apprehensive from the enemy's slackness of some concealed manœuvre; but all continuing quiet and Malatesta seeing no chance of bringing his antagonist to action at once determined to blockade him by occupying the high grounds towards Lucca. Lando apprehensive of the consequences suddenly decamped in confusion before daylight on the twenty-third of July, taking the Lucca road where he was not pursued

* "*Frasca*" signifies a branch. † M. Villani, Lib. ix., cap. xxx.

because Malatesta had orders to respect the Pisan territory, of which Lucca then formed a part; wherefore remaining on the frontier until the first of August, and learning that the company was broken up; the only division of any force being under Lando and Baumgarten on its way to join the Marquis of Monferrato's army against Galeazzo Visconti; he retired by Serravalle to Florence.

Entering that capital in triumph he with singular modesty refused the intended honour of the palio or canopy of state, borne by the most distinguished citizens; and after a formal resignation of his command retired to Rimini with the gratitude of a nation that not long after had reason to repent the confidence which his actual merits had implanted in their mind*.

If Florence had exhibited half her present spirit and listened to the counsel of Pandolfo's father when he solicited her aid against the Chevalier de Montreal she might have crushed the company in its infancy and saved a world of misery to Italy: but now the example was set, the moral effect accomplished, the power and influence of condottieri and free companies demonstrated, the moral weakness of Italy exposed, and the Italian nation doomed perhaps to everlasting servitude. To prove her gratitude and hatred by a single movement, Florence sent a thousand cavalry to assist the Visconti against Count Lando and his comrades and these after doing good service returned with an intimation that the Milanese army was going to invest Bologna, an expedition that gave rise to new political changes in Italy.

The termination of the late campaign was as glorious as its commencement was honourable; it was a war of pure necessity, a rare occurrence in any age or country, but not for that the less expensive; and therefore to meet the increased disbursements a new "*Estimo*" or valuation of real property, and more

* M. Villani, Lib. ix., cap. xxx., xxxi.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xi., p. 595.

extended taxation were commanded, and fresh sumptuary laws, that never-failing subject of Florentine legislation against female vanity, were enacted; but as a compensation it was declared that no women excepting heiresses were thenceforward to be answerable for their fathers' debts.

Some petty hostilities which ended in the capture of Bibbiena and the ruin of the Tarlati next occupied the public mind. Marco the son of Piero was still at war with the Bishop of Arezzo to whom Bibbiena of right belonged, and the Ubertini in consequence of Biordo and Farinata's voluntary service in the late campaign, were restored to all their ancient rights as citizens, and moreover allowed to throw off their nobility and become popolani of Florence. After the public funeral of Biordo, who died of over-exertion in the war, the bishop availing himself of the opportunity afforded by his attendance on that occasion, transferred all his seignorial rights over Bibbiena for an annual sum to the Florentines; an army immediately proceeded to reduce it and Azzo the brother of Biordo was made a knight by the sovereign power of the people and trusted with the arms and honour of the same nation of whom his family had hitherto been the most determined enemies*.

Bibbiena a strong and important post for the protection of Upper Val d'Arno was obstinately defended by the Tarlati, nor could the Florentines, notwithstanding all the internal influence of the Ubertini, succeed until the sixth of January 1360 when the citizens, tired of suffering, treacherously surrendered it. During the siege Marco Galeotto of the Guidi family then under the ban of Florence took the opportunity of reconciling himself to that state by an unconditional offer of both his strongholds of Soci and San Niccolò: this sort of proceeding always pleased Florence, was generally advantageous to the inhabitants, and she rarely failed in generosity to the

* M. Villani, Lib. ix., cap. xlix.—Ibid., cap. xlvii.

chiefs; thus bit by bit she was augmenting her possessions. The town of Serra followed this politic example while Pieve a San Stefano, Montecchio and the valley and town of Chusi fell similarly into the hands of Arezzo, a city whose aggrandisement Florence did not behold with envy from a long-cherished expectation of ultimately resuming all her ancient authority over it: by these losses the once powerful Tarlati lords of half the Tuscan Apennines were now reduced to comparative insignificance*. A.D. 1360.

In addition to this, the castles of Monte Carelli and Vivagni belonging to Tano degli Alberti who had made them a den of thieves, were successively captured and their chief publicly executed at Florence; he had zealously assisted the Archbishop of Milan in Oleggio's invasion of Tuscany, and ever after through apprehension of Florence had clung more closely to the Visconti than they to him, relative to which Matteo Villani tells an amusing anecdote. Tano's jester who saw nothing but folly in exciting the enmity of a near and powerful neighbour like Florence for the doubtful friendship of a distant lord, determined by a practical joke to exemplify his master's absurdity. He therefore threw himself into a ditch which was the line of demarcation between Count Tano's possessions and the Florentine dominion; and as if he were suddenly attacked began shouting out for assistance: at this alarm about five hundred Florentine peasants were soon assembled on the spot; for with so rough a neighbour they were ever wakeful; the Count himself also hastened to the rescue and angrily rebuked his jester when he discovered the trick; but the other quietly answered, "Take notice master mine, that at the sound of one "feeble cry five hundred Florentines instantly come running "to the spot, but not a single Milanese! Certes Count thou "mayest sound the horn of Orlando for a whole year without

* M. Villani, Lib. ix., cap. xlvii., xlviii.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xi., p. 599.

"ever bringing half-a-dozen of the archbishop's men to "your assistance"*.

After this example which, according to the jester's prophecy, was made without any opposition from Milan, some of the Ubaldini were also like the Ubertini allowed to renounce their nobility and soon sold many of their strong places to Florence; so that the principal branches of the three great Apennine families were now effectually tamed, as the equally powerful Counts of Santa Fiore were about the same period by Siena which had suffered greatly from their inroads.

But while these external measures were gradually knitting and binding together the borders of Florentine jurisdiction, the law of admonition was distracting the heart of the commonwealth within: although theoretically approved of by many honest citizens it became most tyrannical in practice and was systematically perverted to the basest purposes of faction: those whom it was at first intended to overwhelm rose lightly above its influence and floated on the angry wave: others, by vainly opposing themselves to its fury were lashed into violent action, or trembling with impotent passion shrank back in terror and despair, while every attempted remedy was either circumvented by cunning or paralysed by fear. The city was ripe for disorder, and a conspiracy which was shortly after detected would have annihilated admonition altogether had not the good fortune of the ruling powers been still in the ascendant. Certain discontented citizens who could ill brook a second place in the commonwealth, and others that still smarted under the stripes of Guelphic tyranny, availed themselves of the irritable state of public feeling to organize a plot that in abolishing the popular grievance would also rid them of their most obnoxious enemies.

Bartolommeo, or according to Stefani, Andrea de' Medici, a resolute and daring partisan, urged on by Niccolò del Buono

* M. Villani, Lib. ix., cap. cix.

and Domenico Bandini, both ill-used citizens, conducted this enterprise and made use of Uberto degli Infangati a bold turbulent man and already, as they discovered, engaged in a conspiracy of his own, for their willing instrument on this occasion. He immediately renewed some recent correspondence with one Bernarduolo Rozzo secretary to Giovanni d'Oleggio, the object of which was to deliver Florence into the hands of his master, but this had failed in consequence of Oleggio's fall and the cession of Bologna to the Pope's legate Albornoz, to whom Rozzo had no hesitation in now transferring the proposal. The Spanish Cardinal's prudence, perhaps his better feelings, overbalanced ambition so that he not only declined the offer but gave notice in general terms to the Florentine government of what was in contemplation. Thus repulsed Bernarduolo offered this ready-made conspiracy to Bernabò Visconti a man of no scruples but those arising from the greater or less probability of success, who entertaining the project until he had fathomed its depth, afterwards amused the intriguing secretary with vain promises which the latter soon got tired of and offered his secret to the Florentine government for 25,000 florins.

The Medician conspirator, whose brother Salvestro was high in office, soon heard of this transaction and although quite ignorant of Uberto's external movements felt sure that it would lead to a general discovery: he therefore at once sacrificed his two companions by revealing the whole transaction to Salvestro, and after stipulating for his own pardon delivered them over to the justice. The conspiracy had spread considerably amongst some of the most distinguished families; and several of the Frescobaldi, Pazzi, Donati, Adimari, Gherardini and Brunelleschi were implicated and banished on pain of death; yet so extensive were its branches that government resolved to make no secret of their knowledge in order to allow the guilty full time for flight. Rozzo after this demanded his reward

and produced a false list of conspirators which had been transmitted to him by Uberto degli Infangati; but acting in the same spirit it was at once pronounced a forgery and destroyed without reading by the government, while Rozzo was somewhat contemptuously dismissed with but 500 florins reward*.

This finished the year 1360 but the following spring and summer were remarkable for two private transactions which although obscured in the grander march of history may exclusive of their intrinsic interest, be deemed not unworthy of record as portraying in darkest and most dazzling colours the heaven and hell of human nature. Both were deep tragedies and both occurred in Tuscany; one in the contado of Florence, the other at Perugia; the former a tale of humble life, the latter a story of more exalted station; the first deserving immortality as a sacred triumph of affection: the second oblivion as disgraceful to humanity; and both exhibiting in painful contrast the various working of human passions.

A.D. 1361.

At the little village of Saint Agatha in the community of Scarperià a young peasant named Jacopo di Piero had the misfortune to kill one of his companions; he immediately informed his father of the accident and the old man with fearful anxiety hurried him off into concealment. When the homicide became known suspicion ultimately fell upon Piero who was forthwith arrested, sent to Florence, and as usual put to the torture, it being then considered illegal to condemn any person without a self-confession of guilt. Piero to save his son's life, and himself from unnecessary torment promptly acknowledged the murder and was condemned to die. Meanwhile Jacopo anxious about the result had secretly entered Florence where the first object that met his eye was the venerable and innocent Piero calmly walking to execution for the expiation of a crime which another had accidentally committed. This was too much for

* M. Villani, Lib. x., cap. xxiv., xxv. — Mar. di Coppo Stefani, Ist Fiorentina, Lib. ix., Rubrica 685.

Jacopo; who rushed with a bursting heart towards the officers of justice crying out "I am the true culprit, I am he that "should suffer and not my innocent father who through pity "and affection has given his own life for mine." The execution was immediately suspended and the truth established, old Piero was released and Jacopo the noble offspring of a noble father, (both Nature's nobles) was amidst the tears of a compassionate people, "*by legal necessity*," says the indignant Villani, most cruelly beheaded! So much for law, untempered by discretion and mercy.

The companion event and contrast to this melancholy picture occurred in the city of Perugia, where a lady belonging to the then predominant order of popolani had a child remarkable for its beauty the offspring of a deceased husband: being left a young widow she married a man who soon became devotedly attached to his little step-son, so much was he taken with the child's amiable disposition and the general excellence that distinguished him, although only ten years of age. The mother with a mixture of natural levity and ungovernable passions began to nourish guilty inclinations towards a young Perugian citizen whom she was determined to obtain for a husband and not only give him her own ample fortune but that of her child also which was still more considerable. Distracted by the violence of this passion she conspired with her paramour to murder both husband and son, and a certain night was settled in which he was to strangle the latter while she administered poison to the former. When all was ready this impious woman ordered the boy to carry certain articles to her lover's dwelling and not to quit the place until the latter should "*despatch* him." He tripped along cheerfully with his errand, delivered the things and then playfully asked to be *despatched*. The young man at once softened by this artless confidence and suddenly struck with remorse; said in a compassionate tone, "Go back to thy mother boy, for this

is not the time to do what she requires." The woman surprised and alarmed at her son's return demanded in a hurried voice why he had not been despatched, and on hearing the expressions of her faltering accomplice instantly remanded the child with peremptory injunctions not to return until he should be really despatched on the preconcerted business. Anxious to please her, the poor boy retraced his steps and with affectionate eagerness entreated her companion to do what she so much desired; but he, still more moved, burst into tears and replied, "Tell thy mother child that this business must not be "confided to me for I will not do it." The child once more returned with this message upon which the implacable monster ordered him down into the cellar and instantly following exclaimed as if addressing herself, "That which *he* has feared "to do I will myself accomplish." Then with a determined hand she coolly drew a knife across her little victim's throat and leaving him dead on the pavement walked quietly to her chamber! Soon after this her husband returned, and as was his custom, immediately asked after the boy, to which the murderess with a calm tongue and the guile of a serpent replied, "Thou knowest well! But go down to the cellar and "peradventure thou shalt find him." Alarmed at her manner he hastened down, and at sight of the child's bloody corpse gasped a moment for breath and then fell senseless. The fiend, who had closely followed, instantly locked him in with the body and then with distracted screams and shrieks of murder the house was soon filled by a crowd of terrified neighbours, to whom she declared that her husband had killed the child for his inheritance. Tearing her hair and face she again burst into screams and tears of counterfeited agony but would not suffer the cellar to be unclosed until the officers of justice came and examined her husband by torture, which being unable to bear the unhappy man admitted everything so nefariously alleged against him.

While preparations were making for his execution the wife's paramour overcome by remorse and compassion and after stipulating for his pardon, discovered the truth and related every circumstance of his own conduct. The miserable woman then made a minute and circumstantial confession without torture and was condemned to have part of her flesh pulled away by red-hot pincers, and the remainder sliced off piece after piece with sharp razors until she expired in agonies, a terrible example to the Perugian people.

There is a sickening barbarity in both crime and punishment too characteristic of an age when the worst passions were in full career, unbridled, and triumphant; and in which vengeance and public justice were always identical. It also suited the people's character of which there were many shades in the Italian provinces; the Perugians being notorious for ferocity and cruel decisions, their neighbours of Siena for volatility; the Florentines for gravity, deliberation, deep thinking; and yet easily roused; the Pisans cunning and malicious, and the people of Romagna held punic faith which they were proverbially said to carry in their hands like small money for their own convenience.

At Florence the triennial scrutiny now took place with unusual keenness, and a system of bribery was exposed of so glaring an aspect that notwithstanding the notoriety of this demoralising influence the public authorities were compelled to punish it, not only with gross fines but by the more trying punishment of a total exclusion from office. In these preventive measures the offices of the priors, Buonomini, and gonfaloniers, were principally aimed at; for they were the highest posts that could be held by citizens, and being invested with great power and influence, besides the honour redounding to every family that had once held them, they were eagerly coveted, and pursued with all the recklessness of party spirit and unscrupulous ambition. However well and honestly

adapted these scrutinies were for securing a numerous reserve of worthy and able citizens to conduct the state: yet in practice, like all other things dependant on human frailty they were soon tainted and the clean-swept tenement again became a habitation of sevenfold evil; so little does liberty and public virtue depend on inanimate legal forms however beautifully sculptured.

In the present instance the priors, gonfaloniers and twelve Buonomini, with the captains of Party, the five chiefs of Trade, and the proconsul of Judges and Notaries being all assembled, the first three bodies in addition to the other names already chosen had to select five persons from each of the sixteen companies; and in this lay the principal evil; for these officers were bribed in various ways by the rich and ambitious citizens of their different quarters and hence the longest purse was generally successful. All who were detected in such illegal courses received their due reward; but threatening and punishment in these cases serve only to sharpen ingenuity not correct morals; the proteus forms of bribery are ever new and slippery but never exhausted; and if the spirit of honesty be not in the nation it cannot be conjured, however potent the spell: thus after a season things continued in their usual way *.

A practice had also prevailed for many years which, to insure some permanence in the ever-changing decrees of this continually reforming and never-mended people, imposed a fine on any public functionary or other person that should attempt to alter them: this fine was made payable to the pope or some other foreign power or person and therefore opened a door for frequent and inconvenient interference with the internal affairs of Florence, by obliging those who wished to alter a law, first to apply for permission to the party that received the fine, without whose consent it would appear no motion for such alteration

* M. di Coppo Stefani, Lib. ix., R. 694.

could be made unless by paying the forfeit; as if the holder of these fines were the party interested and not the commonwealth! This frequently happened at Venice where a similar system obtained, but with this material difference, that *there* the penalty was paid to the state, which was likely on good reasons to remit it; whereas no abatement of such fines could ever be expected from foreign powers except to gain their private ends or to favour some secret adherent.

The seignory deeming this practice inconsistent with national dignity and subversive, as far as it went, of national freedom; rescinded the law and imposed 1000 florins of fine on any person who should ever again propose a similar decree and any attempt to abrogate this reform was to be met by deprivation of office and instantaneous condemnation as a public peculator *.

Some new regulations were simultaneously introduced to strengthen the Party Guelph which already monopolised the government and were fast eradicating their opponents by an unmitigated exercise of the admonitory power. A stronger line of demarcation was also drawn between the remaining aristocracy and those other nobles who had been transferred to the more powerful order of Popolani: this decree compelled any nobleman who should be admitted to the honours of democracy to appear within two months before the senate and publicly renounce all connection with the aristocratic portion of his family, and even to assume another name and arms; and being thus divided he was thenceforth to take no part but that of a mediator in the injuries quarrels or vengeance of his former kinsmen, under the penalty of instant degradation to the state of nobility. This decree occasioned some whimsical changes of both family names and armorial bearings; for there was a natural reluctance even in republican ambition, to part for ever from a time-honoured name and ancient cognisance, and move

* S. Ammirato, Lib. xi., p. 604.

unregarded among the crowd of vulgar appellations that were starting up like mushrooms in the ever-changing atmosphere of a mercantile community. A.D. 1371.

Thus the *Agli* family with a border of garlic round their shield, were turned into the *Scalogni* with a wreathing of shalots; and the *Tornaquinci* into the *Tornabuoni* with a coat-of-arms preserving at least the same colours as their ancient escutcheon. Nevertheless, different members of the same family assumed a variety of names and bearings according as they were successively admitted to the honours of democracy: the last-named race for instance was divided into eight distinct houses with different surnames; the Bardi into nine; the Adimari into ten and so of others *.

It is observed by Sismondi that those laws which were enacted to render the Florentine magistracy accessible to all, produced a contrary effect. The "*Divieto*" excluded many of the most illustrious families from public honours, and the "*Ammonizione*" which was ostensibly intended to preserve a Guelphic equality of political rights to the exclusion of Ghibelines; served the ruling oligarchy as an admirable instrument for paralysing the exertions of those who were likely to oppose them. These rulers were not exclusively of one class: they were not nobles, not popolani, not men indiscriminately named by the public voice; but a mingled faction of the ambitious of every order associated for one common object and that a bad one: with sufficient art to turn a code of democratical regulations to their own private purpose, and sufficient boldness to make use of the power which their pernicious dexterity had enabled them to gain.

But whatever might have been the crimes of this faction in the acquisition of power, their public administration seems to have been steady able and determined, and their conduct

* S. Ammirato, lib. xi., p. 606.—"Consorteria di Firenze," with illuminated illustrations, MS.; the latter copied from a more ancient and very curious MS. of the year 1302 now in the author's possession.

in the late conspiracy unstained by the usual cruelty. They continued to preserve a calm dignity with Pisa and chastised her without war while they vindicated the independence of the Florentine flag and commerce although a purely inland power: they had undauntedly and successfully opposed the grand company the terror of all Italy, when others stood aloof and left them; for it was the character and courage of Florence that procured her foreign aid, not the external aid which excited her native courage. We shall see also that the Florentines were steady in their alliance with Visconti, at least in withholding open assistance from the legate although entreated by him with all the papal influence and far from blind to the consequences of Milanese aggrandisement. Some good fortune also seems to have attended their steps, inasmuch as the dissensions of Volterra enabled them to add largely to their political influence in Tuscany and strengthened them against Pisa while it widened the breach between the latter and Florence.

Volterra, that ancient capital, seated upon its lofty crumbling eminence, and girt with its old grey border of Etrurian walls, still tells the traveller a tale of antique grandeur and past magnificence; but like some other Italian republics it had not been able to preserve its pristine liberty and now bowed under the oppression of Bocchino Belfredotti. This potent chief had been in continual dissension with another branch of his own family which held the strong fortress of Montefeltrino in the vicinity of Volterra, an acquisition eagerly coveted by him to strengthen his position and consequent power of tyranny. The republics of Siena, Pisa, and Florence, generally contrived to be mediators in the quarrels of their less powerful neighbours; sometimes honestly, sometimes politically, but never reluctantly; the last had already been engaged as umpire between the rival Belfredotti and still remained as guarantee for the children of Francesco lord of Montefeltrino after that chief's decease. Pisa and Siena had also meddled in the strife, the former as a friend,

the latter as an enemy of Bocchino; but this chief in attempting to wrong Francesco's offspring, provoked first the severe remonstrances and then the determined interference of Florence, which so alarmed him that he began a negotiation with Pisa for the sale of Volterra to that state.

The secret however transpired, the people already wearied with his tyranny rose in arms and imprisoned him while they despatched messengers both to Florence and Siena for assistance. The former being disposed neither to divide her influence with that state nor trust to the fickleness of Volterra, instantly sent a strong force which cutting off all aid from Siena occupied the citadel and other posts and became masters of the town: Florence then candidly declared her intention of keeping possession for ten years but not interfere with public freedom which on the contrary she promised to maintain. An offensive and defensive alliance was concluded between the two republics and the first act of civic liberty showed itself in the immediate decapitation of Bocchino on Sunday the tenth of October 1361. Such a prize snatched thus unexpectedly by Florence from the Pisan grasp filled this people with rage and disappointment and advanced the war one step nearer *. Their mutual enmity, the subtraction of Florentine commerce, and the growing inclination to war, have already been mentioned; for even thus early was approaching the fulfilment of Gambacorta's words to some Florentine merchants whom he chanced to meet on the Rialto at Venice. Rumour had scarcely announced the withdrawal of Florentine trade from Pisa when he exclaimed: "*Florentines! Florentines!* "*If you only keep firm to your resolution Pisa ere long will be* "*a wilderness.*" They *were* firm, and Pisa's commerce melted away like wreaths of snow on the Apennines; foreign merchants and foreign traders vanished along with it; every dependent

* M. Villani, Lib. x., cap. lxvii.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xi., p. 606.—Sismondi, vol. v., cap. xlvii.

member followed the source of his livelihood; the warehouses, shops, dwellings, and even the city itself were half deserted, and all handicraftsmen in unparalleled difficulties. Such was the condition of Pisa. Wherefore the most discreet citizens sensible of their error endeavoured with many flattering and advantageous offers to entice the Florentines back; but this failing there was a general outcry led by the secret adherents of Gambacorta against the ruling faction who had long determined on hostilities. War was always popular at Pisa especially against Florence; and when peace came this party trusted to making the restoration of commercial intercourse their basis of negotiation: and this it was that had caused so many indirect aggressions all unnoticed by the latter for the sake perhaps of a too much coveted tranquillity. The climax was however now complete, Florentine patience was finally exhausted; the honour of the nation was touched, and war became a settled event in the mind of every man. As a preliminary step an old military follower of the republic named Giovanni di Sasso, after a mock banishment for some fictitious crime, was secretly engaged to fight Pisa with her own weapons. On his own apparent responsibility he very soon surprised the fortress of Pietrabuona which guarding the upper valley of Pescia commanded the Lucca road through the mountain districts. The Pisan government was not deceived by appearances, but rejoicing in this warlike aspect instantly despatched a strong force to recapture the place. Meanwhile Piero Gambacorta broke the bounds of his exile within the Venetian states and appeared at Florence in January 1362. A.D. 1362. He immediately hired a company of Hungarians who happened to be there seeking employment, and with some Florentine volunteers and Lucchese exiles assembled twelve hundred men and marched to the Val d' Era. The Pisans complained of this armament, upon which Florence not only disclaimed any connection with it but recalled all her own citi-

zens who had engaged in Piero's service, so that he found himself alone with a little army of foreigners to whose persons and language he was a stranger, and which was therefore soon dispersed partly by force and partly by a stratagem of the Pisans *. Although peace had not yet been formally broken this inroad was, with some reason and notwithstanding their disclaimer, attributed to the Florentines, and a serious retaliation made on the district of Cerbaia in Val di Nievole: this was soon answered, and the hostile squadrons began thus indirectly to shoulder each other along the whole frontier of Lucca from Monte Carlo to Romita a little beyond Pietrabuona, all trifling blasts that scarcely ruffled the surface but were forerunners of the coming storm.

Florence too had changed her strains of peace to a more warlike symphony, and Zato Passavanti the new gonfalonier, old as he was, applauded this martial spirit; he had three times carried the supreme standard of justice, had been four times prior, and eighty winters had neither dimmed his eye nor abated his mental energy. Often had he urged his countrymen to more vigorous action against Pisa, but until now in vain: a parliament was at last assembled on the eighteenth of May to dictate peace or war; it consisted of more than six hundred citizens the most experienced of the commonwealth, and Zato taking the lead is said to have addressed them substantially as follows.

" If the final and most legitimate object of war, O most " excellent citizens, were not a secure peace, no one would " make use of more earnest language than I, to warn you " against new conflicts: both because I love as a good citizen to " preserve tranquillity and that my great age makes me more " sensible of the advantages of quiet and repose. But casting " aside all ancient examples, I have observed that from the " year of the plague until this hour we never enjoyed less

* M. Villani, Lib. x., cap. lxxxiv., lxxxv.—Sardo, Cronaca di Pisa, cap. cxxx.

" quiet than at those very times when we most ardently desired " it. You all know that from inattention to the warnings of " the lord of Rimini when he conjured us to join him in repel- " ling by force of arms the aggressions of Montreal, we were " subsequently forced to pay 28,000 golden florins for that " robber's forbearance; and when the treaty was broken by " Count Lando during the magistracy of Sandro Guarata, we " were again constrained to purchase it for 16,000 more. And " this disgraceful tribute would for ever have continued if in " the gonfaloniership of Barna Valorini Torriano, who is here " present, the public had not resolved to try whether iron were " not more efficacious than gold; and if, despising alike the " advice and authority of the legate who tried to make her pay " a third ransom of 80,000 florins she had not indignantly " armed, and boldly chasing the enemy from her frontier se- " cured us permanent repose. The same temporising conduct " has been and is again about to be repeated towards Pisa who " openly perseveres in her aggressions, while our affected " blindness to her insults is attributed entirely to fear. Per- " haps because they have added Lucca to their dominions and " that our force has diminished since the Duke of Athens' " tyranny, they imagine that we cannot resist them: but they " seem to forget that Lucca brings no strength; the very gar- " rison necessary to defend it against its own exiles is more " injurious than useful, and a discontented province will ever " be the strength of an enemy. But if we, at once quitting " this mockery of forbearance, only assume a determined atti- " tude towards Pisa we shall by a straighter and more rapid " course arrive at that peace which now although so long and " anxiously pursued still flies from our grasp, and which can in " no way be so permanently secured as by a vigorous well-con- " ducted war. When men are indiscreetly flattered or propi- " tiated with voluntary offers of undemanded service they are " apt to despise those that court them; it is moreover the

" Pisans' nature to think too much of themselves; and our " fawning meekness has encouraged this self-confidence in " them, and an evident contempt of us; but we shall be more " compassionate to both by endeavouring to cure them of this " insanity. They have already driven us from Pisa, they have " robbed us of Sovrana and Coriglio; at this moment they " would expel us from Talamone; and anon we shall see their " armed soldiers scaling our city walls if we allow such auda- " city to remain any longer unpunished. Let us therefore " attack them now in their own dwellings, let us defend Pietra- " buona, not as the possession of Giovanni da Lasso but as our " own; for if we pursue this course I tell you that the Pisans " will soon be glad to let us live in peace. The time favours " us, for we have no other war; our cause is just, for we have " been unfairly and repeatedly provoked; the hopes of victory " far outweigh the fears of defeat, for we have, besides other " advantages, Piero Gambacorta on our side whose adherents " are not yet extinct in Pisa. For their injustice the Lord has " already scourged the Pisans with a pestilence of which " numbers have expired, so that I know not why we should be " such idle spectators; and if you will allow me to say so " without vanity or ambition which at fourscore are nearly dor- " mant, I would tell you that my official career has ever been " fortunate: in my first gonfaloniership nine-and-forty years " ago, war ceased by the death of Henry of Luxemburg who " expired at Buonconvento nine days before I resigned that " dignity: in 1329 when I entered office for the second time, " we sorely afflicted Pisa although the Bavarian occupied her " walls; and in 1336 I was again at the head of your common- " wealth when Piero Rossi overcame Mastino with great glory " to Florence. Do not then doubt, my fellow-citizens, having " the same good fortune in this my fourth magistracy which has " attended the other three: for now we have Pisans alone to " contend with, instead of Pisans and two great emperors in

" the first instance, and afterwards Mastino della Scala, a " prince not second either in power or abilities to the most " potent monarchs of Christendom. Let us then create a " general; let us relieve Pietrabuona and attack the Pisans; " and if the hampering of our trade at Porto Pisano has " already cost them dear, let us compel them even at a higher " price to maintain our commerce in Talamone. But to prove " to them that the last plague did not extinguish all the spirit " and virtue of Florence; young men I call more especially " upon you above every other class to raise your voice for war; " a war not moved by passion but advised by wisdom; not the " wild sally of impetuous youth but the sober emanation of " maturer age and old experience, for until this auspicious " moment we have been far too gentle in suffering with a sickly " patience the vain audacity of Pisa "*.

The high character and prudence of Zato coupled with the truth of his words easily persuaded an already willing audience; a vote for the immediate succour of Pietrabuona was carried by acclamation and a board of eight citizens created to conduct the war. This was tantamount to direct hostilities, but for a while the peace remained inviolate, for Florence was still slow and deliberative in her preliminary movements: the important sanction of the people was gained but her usual caution continued, and some time elapsed ere the whole nation became roused into strong energetic action. Bonifazio di Lupo of Parma a man of few words but honest heart and great military experience was nominated general and despatched to examine and report on the siege of Pietrabuona which he found too far advanced to relieve, and after a bloody and obstinate resistance it was taken on the following day.

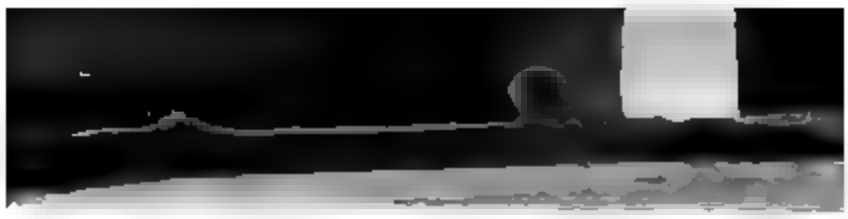
The loss of this place produced great altercation in Florence; recrimination was unsparingly used by both factions but it hastened the preparations for war and promoted future

* Scip. Ammirato, Lib. xii., p. 610.

unananimity. The assembling of the regular militia it was deemed would occupy too much time and produce only unwilling soldiers, wherefore on the first of June 1362 an appeal was made to the rich and powerful gentlemen of town and country to levy companies of effective troops and repair with the least delay to Florence, so that in fifteen days between these and mercenaries an army of one thousand five hundred men-at-arms and four thousand foot including fifteen hundred crossbows thronged the streets of the capital.

Both Siena and Perugia were vainly entreated for assistance; they were secretly disinclined to Florence and gave evasive answers; but Pistoia, Arezzo, the Count Ruberto Guidi and other neighbours acted a more friendly part: on the twentieth of June the whole allied force of one thousand six hundred horse and five thousand foot received their colours at a specified hour and minute, and mysteriously winding through certain streets of the capital especially named by astrologers, finally reached their encampment at Santa Maria a Verzaia without the walls: this superstition was secretly ridiculed by many but favoured by the nation at large, and was well worthy of their Etrurian ancestors.

On the twenty-third the army was at Fucecchio and next day, in despite of the Florentine deputies who formed his council, Bonifazio entered Val-d'-Era, besieged Ghizzano and captured it in two days; thus answering the insolent boasting of Pisa; for even the rulers of that nation casting all dignity aside were on the capture of Pietrabuona, unmeasured in their abuse and silly enough to declare that "If the Florentines dared to "make war one Pisan would be sufficient to carry away three of "their soldiers bound hand and foot; and should the citizens "themselves venture, even the Pisan women would defeat "them." Such was the style of that age, nor does it appear to be much improved in the present; and yet nothing is more silly or unbecoming than the vaunting of nations or individuals



of what they *will* accomplish in a game so proverbially uncertain as war *.

But Florence was not content with a mere land campaign; the protection of her new commercial station had raised a naval spirit in the people and Pisa once so formidable was to be bearded on her own element: with four galleys and three other vessels, under Piero Grimaldi a Genoese officer, they insulted the whole coast, emptied Porto Pisano of its scanty commerce, captured the islands of Giglio and Capraia and in coöperation with two Neapolitan galleys carried fear and devastation along the whole coast; so completely had the fatal Battle of Meloria and its consequences destroyed the maritime power and genius of Pisa and exhausted the various sources of their growth!

Not long after this first swoop, Grimaldi, with his four gallies and one armed ship, landed a detachment of crossbow-men at Porto Pisano itself; he defeated the port guard, occupied the Mole, and pushed forward to the Palazzo del Ponte which was attacked with great vigour. This appears to have been a strong building commanding the bridge and probably served as a custom-house; but a small garrison of twenty chosen infantry well armed would allow of no approach to the gates in spite of all the skill and courage of the assailants. The conflict was obstinate and would probably have failed had not Grimaldi, an experienced commander, ordered two galleys to sway up their masts and long reaching yards; then slinging baskets on the yard-arms which leaned over the land like cranes, he placed two of his best crossbow-men in each, and bringing up his galleys close to the palace raised or lowered the yards according to his marksmen's convenience who remaining on a level with, or overlooking the palace at their pleasure, so galled its defenders that not a man of them could show himself: seeing the defence slacken the assailants suddenly advanced, smashed the gate and captured the place, then directing their efforts against

* Cronaca di Donato Velluti, p. 100, &c^a.—M. Villani, Lib. xi. cap. ii., iii., vi.

one of the large towers which defended the port took it in like manner. This was destroyed, and the other immediately capitulated; the bridge was temporarily repaired and the commercial palace and adjoining suburb sharply attacked; but after a well-sustained conflict the Florentines were finally compelled to retire before a superior force of horse and foot which had finally rallied there from all quarters. Returning on board they burned what vessels still remained and carried off some massive chains that closed the port: these trophies after having been trailed in derision through every place on the road were subsequently placed on two cars and arrived at Florence: being afterwards cut into lengths they were hung up triumphantly in several parts of the city where some portions still dangle at the Bargello and Porta San Gallo, and others are wreathed on the porphyry columns before the brazen doors of the Baptistry: the columns a memorial of ancient friendship, the chains of existing enmity between these two distinguished republics *.

The Genoese crossbow-men who achieved this exploit then formed almost an essential element in the armies of southern Europe; but just at that time it was difficult for Florence to obtain them, because Simon Boccanegra the Doge of Genoa still grateful for Pisan hospitality determined to support that nation in his prosperity. He could not induce his countrymen, whose commercial ties were too close and intimate with Florence, to take an active part against her; but he succeeded in procuring a declaration of rigid neutrality under the sharpest penalties, and these he took care to see rigorously executed. Consequently when four hundred Genoese crossbow-men had been engaged by the Florentines he sternly interfered to stop their departure, even at the risk of collision with the people, and left their agent Francesco Alderotti, a Florentine merchant, no other alternative than a dangerous and secret mission to Nice. Once out of the Genoese states the latter

* M. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. xxx.

infringed no law by enlisting four hundred of their bowmen under Ricieri Grimaldi, brother of the naval commander, at seven golden florins a month each. They soon joined the army and did good service, for Bonifazio Lupo pursuing the war with vigour would listen to no official advice from the ignorant Florentine Commissiaries who served as his council; war he said was not commerce nor governed by the same rules, and having once given him the command it became necessary for the seignory to confide in his experience. This language, too plain to be palatable, displeased a Commissary whose brother belonged to the Board of Eight called "*Gli Otto della Guerra.*" Conduct so independent was reported by this officer in a manner most suited to his own feelings and backed by sufficient influence to procure Lupo's removal for the Florentines were ever jealous of military power: they rarely invested their generals with such authority as that of Pandolfo Malatesta, nor had Bonifazio Lupo the family rank necessary to maintain his ground against party spirit. He was indeed a man of talent, of great honesty, and a disinterested honourable gentleman; but all this did not prevent his being superseded by Ridolfo Varano of Camerino whose only recommendation seems to have been a more distinguished rank without military reputation.

Although mortified at this slight Bonifazio repressed his private feelings and having once engaged to serve resolved to do so sincerely: he therefore redoubled his zeal, pushed forward most active operations in the manner of the age by ravaging all the Val-d'-Era, destroying Padule, burning Castello, San Piero, and Mercato di Forcoli; and in the short space of three days devastating no less than thirty-two towns and villages with their respective territories. Six hundred houses were committed to the flames in this short foray, and after offering battle to the Pisans shut up in Castello del Fosso, Bonifazio retired to Petriolo. But not to let the troops remain idle during the last moments of his command he detached nine hundred

men fifty miles away into the Maremma who returned with an immense booty of cattle which was equally shared amongst the soldiers, Bonifazio alone refusing his portion of the spoil.

To the army's great sorrow he was finally superseded on the ninth of July; his military talent valour and generosity made him popular with the troops; and the more so when casting aside all private wrongs they saw him at Ridolfo's desire cheerfully consent to serve with a subordinate rank in the same army he had so successfully commanded*. The new general, probably under Bonifazio's influence, displayed some incipient activity in taking Cascina and afterwards insulting Pisa by running courses and offering other customary affronts and contemptuous actions under the city walls, as well as by investing Peccioli in consequence of an intercepted letter that discovered the momentary weakness of that garrison; but he soon showed himself so weak and inactive that Lupo retired to Florence in disgust and under pretence of bad health solicited his own discharge. The EIGHT now feeling his value would not consent, and being eager for the fall of a place so important as Peccioli induced him to return with a strong reënforcement and augmented authority.

Peccioli had been reduced to a conditional surrender on the tenth of August if not previously succoured; but the governor who independent of the people had made a desperate resistance, still held out, in despite of their capitulation and for this he hardly escaped death from the vengeance of Florentine rulers, and the inhabitants were in danger of being plundered in revenge for his gallantry had not Bonifazio saved them by insisting on a rigid observance of the capitulation. Montecchio, Aiatico and Toiano successively surrendered, and the town-bell of Toiano was afterwards triumphantly mounted on the Florentine palace as a dinner-bell for the merchants whose commerce Pisa had attempted to destroy.

This shortlived activity was probably due altogether to Lupo's

* M. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. xiii., xv.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xii., p. 614.

influence, for the general was indolent luxurious and unpopular and the army fell into disorder; certain German and Italian leaders of great rank and following, already discontented and further instigated by their pay-agent, demanded the same reward for Peccioli that was usually bestowed for gaining a pitched battle. This being peremptorily refused, one of the Italian leaders setting a hat on his lance's point invited all who wanted double pay to join their standard: this of course produced an immediate dismissal, but marching to Orsaia in the Aretine states they in allusion to their mutinous standard named themselves the company of the "Cappelletto" or little hat, and collecting more than a thousand recruits followed the shameful career that Werner Montreal and Lando had made so popular amongst all who would profit by its infamy *.

To prevent the recurrence of such conduct a decree was immediately promulgated compelling every foreign mercenary to swear allegiance to the commonwealth and its military chiefs and commissaries; to be content with the regular pay and compensation for killed or disabled horses, and neither conspire against the state themselves nor conceal the infidelity of others. They were to be allowed one month's pay for a victory over at least five hundred men-at-arms, but were bound to surrender all prisoners except the cavalry, including the enemy's captain, as well as every Florentine found in arms against his country. The plunder of all stormed places was to be considered as the soldier's own in addition to all other allowances; but places taken by regular siege or capitulation were to be held inviolate, the republic reserving to itself the right of purchasing any prisoners made under different circumstances, at the rate of 200 Lire for each foot soldier and 200 golden florins for gentlemen-at-arms on horseback; all other cavalry being placed at the disposal of the various condottieri.

* M. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. from xvii. to xxv.—Poggio Bracciolini, Istoria, Lib. i., pp. 20, 21. Ed. Firenze, 1598.

Stipendiaries of the republic who should be made prisoners and afterwards ransomed were allowed to resume their former rank with a compensation of two months' pay; and all foreign mercenaries at the expiration of their service were as a company bound by an oath not to make war on Florence for ten years afterwards.

A.D. 1362.

But at a period when almost every other social tie was broken to suit momentary convenience it may be presumed that the latter obligation was but little protection: such men will not be restrained by oaths or bonds unchecked by penalties, and where law is a mere portrait without life it may be much admired and still remain unheeded; when on the contrary it assumes a terrible energy and becomes only a keener weapon of misgovernment it makes timid, cruel, and suspicious rulers; especially in those perilous times when public attachment is most required to preserve, if well governed, what all should feel to be a blessing.

Thus the Pisans conscious of their own oppressions felt that Lucca was their weakest and most costly point of defence and that there would be no safety in trusting to the Guelphic inhabitants; wherefore by one of those wicked strokes of state policy that are often so flippantly justified and which were then and perhaps would still be frequent but for the repressive force of public opinion; they first assembled the whole garrison in the citadel of Agosta, forewarned a hundred Ghibeline families of their purpose with injunctions only to make a show of obedience, and then lighting a candle on the city gate, ordered under the severest penalties of goods and person, that men and women, strangers and citizens, should quit the town and all that space of country included within a mile of its walls, ere the taper should be consumed! The universal dismay is more easily conceived than expressed.

"It was a cruel and sorrowful spectacle" says M. Villani with all that just compassion and bold benevolence of character that

distinguish him, "It was a sorrowful and cruel sight to behold the old men bowed down by years, the women, the weeping damsels; to hear the sobs and woful exclamations; and see the little children with impatient cries all abandoning their homes, their goods, and their native city to wander they knew not whither: to see the ancient gentle citizens, the noble merchants, and industrious artisans, all in hasty flight as though they were pursued by fierce and implacable enemies, leaving their beloved dwellings a prey to the ruthless plunderer."

This detestable mandate was punctually enforced and the city deserted by almost all its inhabitants remained for a while in a mournful calm, the awful repose of desolation falling in snow-like silence. Suddenly the Agosta's portals were dashed asunder, and out rushed a wild tempestuous crew of horse and foot, soldier and cavalier, careering through the streets, with sword and mace and lance, and vaunting shouts of "*Death to the Guelphs, away, away to Florence.*" Such was the Pisans' triumph! And this at a moment when their capital was securely insulted and half the state overrun with Florentine battalions!*

The plague, which afflicted Pisa and caused much of her disasters diminished with the waning year, and entirely ceased ere the commencement of 1363; but once relieved from this scourge the Pisans gained new spirit and became eager even in the depth of winter to begin a fresh campaign: Altopascio and Santa Maria-a-Monte were attacked in January; A.D. 1363. Pescia and Barga nearly surprised and the latter regularly besieged, but all with small forces and unsuccessful results; yet Florence with her numerous army found considerable difficulty in opposing them; a consequence of its disorganised and inefficient state.

The tribes of rapacious usurers that prowled round the armies of those days, equally convenient and probably far less

* M. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. xvi.

scrupulous than the Jews who now plunder our seamen; had been supplying money to the soldiers at high, although considering their risk, not perhaps unjustifiable interest: when disappointed in their expectations of repayment they seized without scruple on arms, horses, and pay or received the two former in pawn for their advances; the republic therefore often found itself with only a corps of disarmed and dismounted troops when most in need of effective men, and to remedy this inconvenience a military bank of loan was instituted which began discounting on the first of March with a capital of 15,000 florins from the commonwealth*.

Soon after this Ridolfo da Camerino having finished his engagement quitted Florence with little honour to himself or the state, and early in March Piero Farnese a man of far different stamp and known reputation succeeded him: it was during the inactivity caused by this change that the Pisans attempted to surprise Barga; but Farnese lost no time in joining the army then quartered in the Val-de-Nievole, and thence carried on a secret correspondence with certain discontented Lucchese citizens: he made an unsuccessful attempt to surprise their city but the Pisans were far too vigilant for such enterprises, wherefore after putting every man to death that was suspected of being privy to the plot, their main army made a sudden inroad on Volterra and captured Gello on the one hand while they pressed the siege of Barga and defeated a Florentine detachment sent to assist the revolt of Castiglione and other towns of Garfagnana, on the other. This small division of troops under Spinellocchio de' Tolomei of Siena and Currado da Jesi were surprised and nearly surrounded in the hills of Garfagnana by a superior force, their only chance of retreat being in the defence of a narrow mountain path by which the enemy could intercept them. The two commanders on seeing this, leapt at once from their horses,

* M. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. xxxviii., xxxix., xl., xlv.

got possession of the pass and defended it alone against the whole Pisan army until all their own people were in safety: they then surrendered themselves as prisoners of war*!

Nettled at these incipient failures Farnese became more eager for a blow, especially as the "*White Company*" of English adventurers then in the Marquis of Montferrato's service was daily expected and too powerful to cope with, and the Pisan general Rinieri da Baschi was no less eager for a pitched battle from the wish of gaining his laurels ere the English came†. This unity of purpose brought Farnese on the seventh of May near Bagno a Vena with eight hundred horse and an equal number of veteran infantry; whereupon Rinieri with six hundred horse and far more numerous footmen advanced from Pisa with a continually increasing force of infantry, intending to seize the pass of San Piero and cut off the Florentines' retreat; but Farnese allowed no time for this; closing rapidly with the Pisans he at once formed in order of battle and led on the attack: the ground proving too rough to use the lance with precision he called out to his cavalry to trust only to their swords and then drove with his whole line into the adverse squadrons. There was no lack of courage to meet them and the Florentine chivalry were twice dashed back in disorder, for at first these light Hungarian horsemen could ill stand the handling of steel-clad cavaliers; yet in a third charge the Pisans gave way but soon rallying behind the second line and supported by a superior infantry who fought amongst them, they again made head with more daring vigour, Pietro re-formed his men and met them with harder blows and louder cheers; the battle now became more bloody, close, and obstinate, for neither would yield an inch of ground; and it was not the formal

* M. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. xlv., xlvi., xlvii., xlix., l.

† According to Ranieri Sardo's Cronaca di Pisa, there were eight hundred English in the Pisan service as early as 1358, of the Pisan reckoning, which was a year in advance of the Florentine mode. Vide cap. cxxvi.

combat, the wonted stage-play of unprincipled mercenaries who spared each other and duped their employers but the desperate conflict of angry and determined men. Thus the fight continued for a while without advantage on either side until Piero suddenly ordered two hundred horse to turn the enemy's flank, a movement executed with such spirit that the hostile ranks were severed almost without resistance and their ensigns boldly reached and as bravely captured. This success gave fresh vigour to the front battle where swords were flashing and knights and steeds falling; for many a horse suffered by flanking spear-thrusts from the intermingled infantry; but the Pisans fell back disordered, and finally retired in confusion from the field.

Rinieri and many other gallant gentlemen were taken while still bravely fighting, after two hours and a half of closely contested and uncertain victory: the Hungarian cavalry made numerous prisoners, but there was also great slaughter, for personal enmity combined with honourable emulation to continue the conflict even when success was hopeless. Intelligence of the battle was received the same day at Florence with shouts of joy, and on the eleventh of May Piero Farnese entered that capital in triumph with a hundred and fifty prisoners of distinction, a thing that greatly enhanced the victories of those days by its fame and profitable consequences. He was offered a crown of laurel by the state; but modestly declined it, saying that such honours should be reserved as amongst the ancient Romans for greater triumphs and more brilliant victories*. The joy for this success was somewhat diminished by the loss of Altopascio which Guelfo degli Scali treacherously delivered to the Pisans for 3000 florins; wherefore his property in town and country was publicly destroyed by the people under government's direction.

Meanwhile Ghisello degli Ubaldini an expert officer and

* M. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. l., and li.

bitter enemy of Florence, was elected general of the Pisans and helped to maintain the personal and angry character of this war even more than had hitherto existed; a mortal hatred in fact prevailed, not only between the rival commonwealths but between the generals colonels and private soldiers; and to such excess that not even the plague itself though daily spreading, could mitigate its violence. Marching from Empoli Farnese resumed hostilities on the left bank of the Arno with two thousand five hundred horse and a strong force of cross-bows besides other infantry, but could not, even with all the provoking ravage of his troops, either bring the enemy again to action or raise the siege of Barga which they still perseveringly maintained; he therefore determined to march directly on Pisa and insult them in their capital.

When near that city an advanced guard of sixty Barbute under Amerigo a German commander, met and routed a hundred of the enemy's horse; this brought two hundred more on Amerigo who was beginning to waver when Otto another German colonel rode hastily up with his followers to the rescue: the Pisans were again repulsed in some disorder, whereupon their Podestà made a powerful sally at the head of six hundred Barbute and a strong body of armed citizens and soon discomfited the Germans. Things now began to look serious, when Piero Farnese galloped up with three hundred fresh men-at-arms closely followed by his main battle. "Is this the way "you fly before an enemy we have so often defeated" exclaimed the general, and at the same moment lowering his lance charged the nearest of his adversaries with a bold and rough encounter. The affair was no longer a skirmish or brief in duration; the Podestà, well supported by almost all the nobles and Pisan citizens, fought stoutly and the battle soon became general. After a hard struggle the Pisans yielded on every side; many were killed by force of steel, and many thrust headlong into the Arno by the pressure of a universal flight:

the defeat was perfect and every man did well; but two gentlemen who by consent of friend and foe were allowed to have surpassed every other in personal prowess were knighted by Farnese during the hottest of the battle. Proud of this second victory he challenged the enemy again to meet him, and on their refusal coined gold, silver, and copper money at a place called the Spedaluzzo close to the walls of Pisa, as a mark of victory and sovereign power. The silver coins represented a fox, the emblem of Pisan cunning, helplessly sprawling under the feet of the Baptist whose image was impressed on all the Florentine coinage. After this insult he withdrew, but not in quiet, for his rear-guard where the newly-dubbed knights commanded was smartly attacked; yet the enemy was repulsed with great spirit even to the city gate where a Florentine trumpeter fell wounded by an arrow from the walls, an obstinate struggle ensued to gain an embroidered banner attached to the instrument, a trophy of no small moment in those romantic days, and neither lost without dishonour nor won without fame. Many fell in the conflict, several were made prisoners on both sides, yet Florence prevailed; her lily was carried off unsullied, but her two brave champions Guglielmo di Bolsi, and a certain Giovanni, whose surname is wanting, remained captives. The army then marched to Peccioli, Farnese meaning to hasten the siege of Montecalvole which although reduced to extremity was saved by an artifice of the Pisans: annoyed at this and the continued siege of Barga in the face of two such victories, Piero suddenly detached a division of his army in the latter direction which coming unexpectedly upon the Pisans attacked and carried their works, raised the siege and expelled them from the district.

This was the last feat of Piero Farnese: a wide-spreading pestilence now raged through Italy, Egypt, Syria, and all the Levant; through Istria, Padua, and Venice it ran a second course; almost all Tuscany suffered; and at Florence after

three months' uninterrupted progress it was still in full activity. The army became infected, and on the nineteenth of June saw its general struck down by the fatal malady at Castel Fiorentino, and a corpse the following midnight at San Miniato al Tedesco. No greater misfortune could have overtaken the commonwealth at this moment, and no man fell with more heartfelt regret: he was valiant wary and experienced in arms, faithful to his employers, of a daring courage, and had almost uninterrupted good fortune in his enterprises. After a few days' delay for the arrival of his brother, Piero Farnese was interred with public honours in the cathedral of Florence where an equestrian portrait of him by Andrea Orcagna still remains as a mark of national gratitude*.

With a feeling less prudent than amiable, as if great qualities were necessarily inherent in families, the Florentines conferred Piero's command on his brother Rinuccio as they had formerly done that of Piero Rossi on Orlando; but the former like the latter was a man of far inferior force and had suddenly to cope with an enemy that even Piero himself had feared to encounter. This was the "*White Company*" of English adventurers under Albert a German, who had just arrived at Pisa after having in vain offered his service to Florence: against Farnese's advice they were rejected although consisting of two thousand five hundred horse and two thousand foot merely through a false and miserable economy which thus changed the whole aspect of the war and afterwards brought down misfortune on the commonwealth.

The military spirit of Pisa which even pestilence had not subdued, mounted high on this occasion and Ghisello with an army of three thousand three hundred men-at-arms and six thousand infantry immediately began the campaign. Much might now have been accomplished if war, as distinct from plunder, had been better understood and military operations

* M. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. lvii., lviii.—D. Velluti, Cronaca, p. 102.

carried on with the spirit and knowledge of a Castruccio; for Piero was no more, and the blast that carried him off had withered the strength of his army*. But there was not a steady system of conquest; an angry people with no desire but vengeance; a general hired to fill his own purse while he carried this object into execution; and a legion of foreign robbers to whom all causes were equal, all wars legitimate, were not adapted to anything but to inflict the greatest possible amount of misery on both friend and foe; wherefore the genius of Italian warfare in those times consisted more in acquiring empty triumphs, insulting an enemy, and devastating a helpless country, than in the acquisition of any solid and permanent advantage. The Florentine territory was entered by Val-di-Nievole and Pistoia first insulted by preventing the citizens from celebrating their accustomed games on Saint James's day, an indignity so great as to cause the announcement to Ghisello of the Pistoians' intention to run no more courses for the Palio until they did it under the walls of Pisa.

The plain of Florence next felt the war, Campi and Peretola were occupied; the Palio was run for under the gates of Florence; money was coined within sight of the town; and to complete the insulting mockery three asses were hanged at Ponte à Rifredi as the effigies of three Florentine citizens, whose names were formally attached to the necks of their representatives. The destruction of town, village, hamlet, palace, villa, and cottage, followed hard upon this puerile vaunting, and the whole western plain became one promiscuous mass of ruin: yet here and there the villa and gardens of some rich citizen were expressly left untouched, smiling amidst general desolation, to excite suspicion and distract the Florentine councils.

Afterwards crossing the Arno Ghisello burned Lastra, advanced to Empoli, swept through the Lower Val-d'-Arno with fire and sword, and then tired of their work the soldiers returned

* Cronaca di Dan. Velluti, p. 102.

loaded with booty and prisoners to Pisa. This was the first act of vengeance; and the mocked and insulted captives were now sarcastically told that it was the prostrate Fox who had served them so; but the Pisan general scarcely enjoyed his triumph longer than the Florentine, for he died of fatigue and fever a few days after, as much honoured and regretted by the Pisans as Farnese had been by the Florentines*.

The plague still raged in Florence: and we may here suspend the general narrative to relate the death of one of its most illustrious victims, the historian Matteo Villani brother to Giovanni who fifteen years before had been swept off by the former pestilence. Matteo as his son Filippo relates, died on the twelfth of July 1363 after a long struggle of five whole days with this all-powerful malady; a circumstance attributed by Filippo to his sober and temperate habits. He enjoined Philip Villani to continue his history to the close of the Pisan war in order not to leave that portion of the work imperfect; and seems, from a fact mentioned in his last chapter to have written until two or three days before he was plague-struck. As a historian his style is not so simple or agreeable as Giovanni's, but there is perhaps a greater force of character which fixes the attention and at once impresses the reader with a conviction of his honesty his constantly benevolent feeling and strong sense of justice, accompanied by evident contempt for the superstitious follies of the day, a weakness which his brother could not entirely discard. His character is well sketched by Sismondi. "There is no historian that inspires us with more respect esteem and affection than Matteo Villani. Religious without superstition, he respects the church and yet dares to paint in the strongest colours the crimes or corruption of some of its chiefs. He understands the human heart, and

* Filippo Villani, Lib. xi., cap. lxi., lxii., lxiii.—Leo. Aretino, Lib. viii., p. 153.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xii., p. 625.—Cronaca di D. Velluti, p. 100, &c. Roncioni, Istor. Pis., Lib. xv., p. 870.

is sufficiently versed in politics to unravel all the errors of governments and assign events to their veritable cause; but he is too good a man ever to approve of faithlessness or to imagine that any advantage can result from perfidy. He raises himself above the prejudices of judicial astrology from which his brother was not exempt: he embraces all the known world in his history and with a philosophic and piercing glance he assigns to each nation its true character. He is animated in the painting of virtue; he is inflamed against vice; he burns at the name of liberty. No Italian historian has ever rendered to the latter a more noble and more enduring homage. The party that governed Florence did not always patiently bear his censures; they admonished him as a Ghibeline on the twenty-ninth of April 1363 and thus kept him from public employment during the last year of his life "*.

The task of recording past events sometimes awakens a certain feeling of high judicial authority and even a sort of immortality in the historian: he calls up the spirits of bygone ages to his presence; draws from them the story of their time; confronts them with others of a different stamp and nation; investigates their truth; acquits or condemns; and then dismisses them to make room for another race of brief and restless beings. Thus age after age, race after race, are successively unfolded, each pregnant with its own peculiar incidents the cause or consequence of other times; and he like a quiescent everlasting spirit calmly reviews them all as one by one they pass before his tribunal. A new cotemporary now comes before us for a brief space, and with congenial spirit though more careless style, continues what his sire and uncle had so honestly and laboriously commenced. According to Filippo Villani, the administration of Florence at this period, whether well or ill-directed for general good, was principally in the hands of men belonging to the Contado and district recently settled in the

* Sismondi, vol. v., p. 93.—M. di Coppo Stefani, Lib. ix., Rubrica 692.

capital and but little versed in civil government; and of other and still greater strangers who residing in Florence were through their wealth enrolled amongst the trades, and between usury and merchandise had amassed so great riches that their alliance was joyfully accepted by the most illustrious families. By means of presents hospitalities and supplications they had crept high enough to drop their names into the election purses at the periodical scrutiny for public honours, while as already said, the great popular families were extensively affected by the Divieto. Many wise experienced citizens of ancient races were thus excluded from office, and even those who still assisted in the administration were suspiciously regarded and even frowned on by the others. The consequence was a want of unanimity in the councils, and often, through mere opposition, the adoption of measures directly contrary to what the old citizens proposed although with manifest injury to the commonwealth. Many young people scarcely fledged were found in office, placed there by their kinsmen's management while forming part of the various administrations; three out of four had not past their twentieth year and must have been put on the list of candidates while yet in their cradle. The public mind was moreover full of disorder and hatred from the poison of frequent admonitions; and the thirst of pecuniary gain occupied so many that no means were neglected, both by the creation of new and useless offices for favoured men and by more secret ways, to share the public revenue. Parties ran high, each suspiciously watching the other's actions, and thus, says Philip Villani, the unhappy republic found itself a prey to concealed hatred, private avarice, and youthful inexperience*.

No state apparently offered a surer mark for an artful tyrant to strike at, and the blow was struck but failed; wherefore we may conclude that although the general picture drawn by

* Fil. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. lxv.

Filippo is correct, yet the effects of the admonitory lash which his father had so lately felt must have imparted a stronger colouring to the portrait than a less interested painter would have given. A.D. 1393.

In this state of public feeling the war recommenced; and so many military companies had been formed in France and Italy that armies seemed to start into being by the mere stamp of a condottiere's foot. Relying on such facilities the Florentine government had for economy disbanded most of its troops trusting to have an efficient army ready to take the field early in the spring, and with this object in view they had already engaged the "*Compagnia della Stella*" then in Provence and amounting to six thousand Barbute, but which afterwards failed them through the machinations of Visconti; also two thousand more in Germany, besides five hundred men-at-arms under Henry de Montfort and two barons of the royal house of Suabia. Subsequently another body of a thousand German cavalry was also engaged, but so badly equipped that the commonwealth was compelled even to supply them with lances; these added to a thousand striplings under Count Artimanno formed, at least in perspective, the new army of Florence. An efficient chief also became necessary and none living held so honourable a place in the public memory as Pandolfo Malatesta of Rimini the conqueror of Lando and preserver of Florence. A deputation was accordingly sent into Romagna to offer him his former dignity with the usual military powers, but four years had sufficed either to plant new and more extravagant notions of ambition in the heart of Pandolfo, or to ripen those already engrafted: his former connexion with Florence had enabled him to spy into all her weakness, to investigate the state of parties, sound the public mind, and lay a foundation for future work whenever a convenient season should present itself. Having such views he probably maintained a close connexion amongst certain parties in the commonwealth who

secretly urged him to accept the command on any terms, as in consequence of the alarm and perilous state of that republic he would ultimately gain everything he desired. A.D. 1363.

After deep consultation with his father, Pandolfo returned to Pesaro where he had left the Florentine mission, but during the negotiation made some demands so extravagant that the deputies were in the act of an abrupt departure with their foot in the stirrup when he recalled them and said that he never wished to occupy the post of generalissimo to the Florentine armies, but as an ancient friend of the republic he would go and serve for two months in her cause. This offer was accepted and on the fifteenth of August he entered Florence with only two hundred followers, the remembrance of his former service being sufficient to insure him a popular reception and his high rank the chief command of the army.

A fresh council of eight, two from each quarter, was elected to conduct the war, about which however Pandolfo showed himself very dilatory although the new Pisan general, L'Omo Santa Maria lord of Jesi, had already cleared the passes of Chanti, entered the upper Val-d'-Arno and captured the town of Figline making much booty and many prisoners of both sexes; "and," says Villani, "Heaven only knows how the women were received in the hands of the English who are brutal and cruel men and enrich themselves by our misfortunes." This sudden irruption alarmed the government but many of the more opulent who had their villas and palaces and gardens immediately surrounding Florence were well contented with a distant war, vainly supposing that the plains of San Salvi and Ripoli were less vulnerable than those of Campi and Peretola. Pandolfo who could now no longer remain idle moved forward with all the Florentine forces and pitched his tents near Incisa in a weak extended position purposely chosen, against the remonstrances of Rinuccio Farnese and every other officer of distinction except Count Artimanno, who was as false as Malatesta

himself. The latter not satisfied with the dangerous situation of his army ordered the Cappelletto company, then in the Tuscan Maremma under Florentine orders, with the German Amerigo and five hundred more of his best cavalry besides other good troops and officers, to make a diversion in the Pisan state for the purpose of forcing them to recal their squadrons from the Upper Val-d'-Arno. After this he quietly returned to Florence leaving the refuse of his troops in an untenable position under Rinuccio Farnese to cope with the veteran and war-hardened soldiers of the English Edward. Seeing this, the latter artfully engaged one of their own people, (by a formal challenge) in single combat with a Florentine, and flocking in small parties unarmed to the duel completely reconnoitred the camp, which the following morning was attacked and carried after a long and spirited resistance while Count Artimanno with the whole garrison of Incisa looked quietly on. The defeat was total and the loss in killed and prisoners of note upwards of four hundred: the English retired with their prey to Figline and marched on the following day to the attack of Incisa, but Count Artimanno had already evacuated it and was in full retreat to Florence *. The citizens were astounded at the news of this disaster and Pandolfo made a show of marching to the succour of Incisa, but he had scarcely proceeded a few miles when meeting Count Artimanno in full retreat he instantly returned in apparent terror to the capital. There in a well-pretended alarm he dwelt on the necessity of providing for immediate defence, but to do so effectually he required absolute power both within and without and an oath of allegiance from the troops; in other words he demanded the unconditional seignory of Florence.

* Leonardo Aretino (as translated by Donato Acciaioli, Lib. viii., p. 153), in his brief manner passes rapidly over this transaction, leaving the reader to infer that neither Malatesta nor Artimanno behaved treacherously; but I follow Filippo Villani, a cotemporary author, who may be at least supposed to give the public opinion of the time, and is followed by subsequent writers.

Such audacious proposals, backed as was expected by his own party in the state, were made on the supposition that the citizens through terror and necessity would be compelled to receive him on his own conditions as a less dangerous visitor than the English, and he nearly succeeded in his object. A great council was immediately convoked and Malatesta's demands proposed for acceptance * : all felt the want of an able leader at that perilous moment and Pandolfo's courage and talent were as unquestionable as his audacity and immeasurable ambition: every one feared to oppose him, many secretly favoured him; but all felt that the concession of such extensive powers to such a man would be an act of folly and pregnant with danger to the commonwealth. A general silence prevailed, for each individual feared to commit himself by solitary resistance. At last Simon Peruzzi rose and boldly voted against any concessions: this he said was an impudent demand for no less than the entire sovereignty of Florence; he bade them remember the Duke of Athens and his bold successful treason: we are all acquainted, he added, with the sweets of Liberty, let us then live and die in her arms. The national spirit was at once rekindled by this short address; it spoke to the heart of all, for every man felt that in these few words his own secret wishes were courageously expressed; the adherents of Pandolfo, if any went so far, were rebuked to silence and his ambitious pretensions for ever extinguished. A new oath of allegiance was instantly required from the troops; a new officer called "*the Defender of the People*," with full powers within the city, was created for the protection of public liberty, and the supreme military command with the usual authority offered to and accepted by Malatesta but with the secret deter-

* These extraordinary councils were called "*Consiglio de' Richiesti*," or Council of the Summoned, to which every citizen who had ever filled the higher offices of state, or who enjoyed any great public reputation was cited as a matter of course; they were sometimes very numerous and expressed the true public opinion.

mination to accomplish his purpose by some other means. His first act was to dismiss Count Artimanno and eight hundred cavalry on pretence of their recent conduct, but in reality to weaken the public force and embarrass the government; and then still under the affected sensation of deep alarm, he barricaded the roads, raised and strengthened the ramparts in various places and made every preparation for an immediate siege*.

The English having active spies who transmitted intelligence of what passed, maliciously increased the confusion by sending word that on the twenty-second of October they would burn the suburb of Saint Nicholas which they therefore advised the government to look well to. This distracted the Florentines with doubts and fears, but thinking the execution of the threat most probable they reënforced the position of San Miniato-a-Monte and garrisoned it with four hundred Pistoians besides five hundred exiles under Niccolò Buondelmonti and Sinibaldo Donati who had been recalled from exile with the promise of pardon. Public alarm was at its height when on the appointed day the English banners were seen floating over the neighbouring plains of Ripoli; but after having plundered all the surrounding country the general anxiety was relieved by intelligence of their final retreat loaded with booty to Figline.

Malatesta issued out with a large force and was joined by a larger body of peasantry eager for a revenge that might easily have been taken, for the English were tired with a long and rough night march through difficult roads, and impeded by their prisoners and plunder; but the affected alarm of Pandolfo and the real terror of both seignory and people, coupled with a general impression that the English were lions and not men, was their salvation as they themselves afterwards acknowledged. There was at this period and for long after in Florence, no

* Fil. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. lxvii., p. 628.—Leon. Aretino, Lib. viii., folio lxviii., lxix.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xii., 153.—Sismondi, vol. v., p. 96.

deeper sound of terror than the name of an Englishman; the very nurses used it as a threat to their wayward children, and the general impression of them was something beyond human nature: their movements were so rapid as almost to give the idea of ubiquity; their daring exceeded anything before witnessed, their hardiness and utter contempt of seasons astonished the Italians, and it is well known of what excesses Englishmen are capable when unrestrained by the rigid discipline of regular warfare. It may easily be conceived therefore what an impression was made by the ferocity of these bands of experienced plunderers fresh from the wars of France and England, accustomed to blood, and dead to every passion but war avarice and cupidity. Their long sojourn at Figline and daily destruction of a country much of which belonged to the richest citizens of Florence, made Pandolfo hope that despair of external affairs coupled with internal quarrels and confusion would oblige the people at last to grant his demands; but the enemy's sudden dislodgment destroyed this notion until his hopes were somewhat revived by the treacherous attack and dispersion of the Cappelletto company by the Senese on its march to Florence. This was an act of vengeance for recent excesses, which the Florentines deemed it most prudent not to notice for the moment although their army lost a thousand veteran soldiers by the deed, but they had afterwards an opportunity of repaying this open declaration of Senese feeling towards an ally in distress *.

Meanwhile the English loaded with an accumulation of plunder bethought themselves of returning to Pisa by the road they came, and to secure a quiet march gave the Florentine government due notice that on the eleventh of November they intended to consecrate a priest at the convent of San Salvi one mile from the town, requesting the seignory and citizens to assist in the ceremony. Every report of every spy confirmed

* Fil. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. lxx., lxxi.

this intelligence and even Pandolfo believed it: the English in fact began their march in that direction, and the appearance of only a single soldier on the Rovezzano road threw the whole city into confusion. The alarm-bells instantly rung an unceasing peal; the people ran here and there in perplexity, without order, without leader, and even quitting their standards to stare at what they supposed to be passing beyond the walls; so that long before Pandolfo, who was studiously indolent, had finished his repast and taken his post at the gate of La Croce more than eight thousand well-armed citizens were already promiscuously assembled in the field and well advanced towards San Salvi, where substituting zeal for discipline they deemed themselves fully prepared to meet an army of old experienced soldiers.

About the time that by Pandolfo's calculation the fight should have commenced he closed both the Santa Croce and Justizia gates leaving as he thought the greater part of the Urban troops in the hands of the English; but the moment this act of treachery became known the external tumult rose loud and high; men women and children kept crowding in terror under the walls; loud cries to throw open the gates were heard and responded to within; the whole town was indignant; nor was it until the dread of internal tumult made Pandolfo overcome his pretended fears for the public safety that he condescended to re-open the city gates.

This conduct left no doubt of his intentions on the mind of any; the name of Walter de Brienne was bandied from mouth to mouth; the priors' palace was immediately victualled garrisoned and strengthened, its battlements armed with great crossbows and other engines, and every citizen alive and up for the preservation of liberty. In the middle of this confusion a messenger came hurrying in with the tidings that Figline had been burned and the English were departed by the Chanti district on their return to Pisa. Thus quieted, the

priors cited Malatesta to their bar after having held a general council, and with a sharp reprimand ordered him to proceed to the frontier and there take up whatever position he pleased, for the people could defend their city without him; and at the same time informed him that had it not been for his illustrious name and former services he might have expected less agreeable treatment *.

The English meanwhile made good their unmolested retreat, were received in triumph at Pisa and allotted part of that city for their winter quarters; but being now enriched and tired of campaigning they determined to enjoy themselves and without much scruple about the means, so that the citizens suffered greatly from their licentiousness; many Pisan wives and daughters were sent to Genoa for protection against their insults, and although these ruffians were soon after wanted for the siege of Barga they refused to stir from the capital except at their own convenience. In January 1364 they engaged for six months longer in the Pisan service under almost unlimited conditions, for a payment of 150,000 florins: all other mercenaries were disbanded, and the English alone led by Sir John Hawkwood, now commander-in-chief of the Pisan army, remained to fight the battles of that republic †. A.D. 1364.

These troops, as Villani describes them, enamoured of plunder and delighting in battle, prepared a thousand "*Lances*" on the second of February in the middle of an unusually rigorous winter, when war generally sleeps, to resume hostilities against Florence. The English were the first who conducted men-at-arms into Italy under the name of "*Lances*" each lance consisting of three soldiers: before this they came "*a bandiere*," or in bands of about thirty each but were more commonly called "*Barbute*;" either as Sismondi says because the German men-at-arms wore a tuft or beard of horse-hair on their casques, or more probably because they wore visored hel-

* Fil. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. lxxiii. † Fil. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. lxxiv., lxxix.

mets the chin-piece of which was denominated "*Barbuta.*" This company as already remarked surprised the Italians by their apparent indifference to all the vicissitudes of weather and seasons in their incursions. They were all young men and mostly born and bred in camps during the long wars between France and England: they were hot and wilful, says Villani; accustomed to rapine and homicide; ever ready with their weapon; reckless of personal safety, but in all the discipline of war quick and obedient to their officers. From their excessive fearlessness and self-confidence they were careless in their mode of encamping, spreading themselves too much and too irregularly apart, and were in general so badly posted as to be easily surprised by a brave and skilful enemy. The armour of almost all consisted of a heavy cuirass with a steel coat of mail hanging over the breast; cuisses, greaves, and bracelets of iron, strong swords and daggers and tilting-lances, which they managed on foot with great facility. Each had one or two pages, some more according to their means, who the moment their master's armour was thrown off cleaned and burnished it up so that when they moved on the field of battle they shone and sparkled like so many mirrors and therefore seemed so much the more terrible. Others were archers who used long yew bows in the management of which they were quick obedient and extremely skilful. Their manner of fighting on the field of battle was almost always on foot: giving the horses to their pages they closed up their ranks together in a form almost circular, or as Ammirato describes it, like a hedgehog, two of them holding one lance, in the same manner as the hunting-spear is held to meet the boar.

The same author says that they rarely began their charge until within twenty paces of the enemy; and then closely linked and their lances lowered, with a slow firm step and fearful shouts they came down with exceeding force upon their adversaries. It was difficult to break their order; but expe-

rience proved them to be better adapted to sudden nocturnal inroads and the plundering of towns than to keep the field long together in regular warfare; and, adds Filippo Villani, they succeeded more from the cowardice of our people than their own military virtue. They had portable ladders in pieces of never more than three rounds in length, one piece fitting into the other like a trumpet and so ingeniously contrived that they could rapidly unite them to any required length and thus scale the highest towers with certainty*.

Such were our countrymen under Sir John Hawkwood, or Giovanni Aguto, by which name he is better known in Italian history: he was a man who had served through all the wars of Edward III.; personally courageous, cunning, quick in seizing advantages and not easily blinded by the mere reputation of his antagonists. With a thousand of such "*Lances*" and two thousand infantry, making altogether an army of five thousand fighting men besides the pages, Hawkwood left the Pisan frontier in the midst of a winter such as was never before remembered in Tuscany. Throughout nearly all December and until the month of March it had scarcely ceased to snow: the cold according to Villani, was bitter beyond example, the winds piercing and the ice unusually thick, so that it became almost impossible for horses to cross the mountain paths, especially some that could not well be avoided. Nevertheless Hawkwood marched in one night through the deep snows of Val-di-Nievole surprised the country about Vinci and Lamporechi and even took the inhabitants in their beds; for the peasantry would hear no warning nor obey any order that drew them from their property to the shelter of fenced towns in a season when such an attack was deemed impossible. Rallying from their first surprise however the people made a good defence and lost but few; the English suffered more, especially by a sudden attack

* Fil. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. lxxxi.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xii., p. 633.—Orl. Malavolti, Lib. vii., Parte ii^{a}, p. 125.

on Vinci whence they were repulsed with great loss in consequence of the very daring nature of their assault. Carmignano next felt their force but they were still gallantly repulsed in two distinct attacks: not liking this they turned off to Montale above Montemurlo intending to penetrate by the mountains into the Mugello district, but finding fifteen hundred resolute peasantry in possession of the passes, they retired by Serravalle to the Pisan territory.

In this expedition Hawkwood lost three hundred men in killed and prisoners as well at Vinci and Carmignano, as by the peasantry of Serravalle and the Pistoians: they made few prisoners, scarcely plunder enough to support themselves, many horses died of cold and fatigue under a continual fall of snow both day and night, and many soldiers expired after their return into quarters; so that the company was much diminished and probably acquired a little more respect for the prowess of their Tuscan opponents*.

Peace was concluded in March between Galeazzo Visconti and the Marquis of Monferrato, as well as between the Pope and Bernabo, by which Bologna remained to the Church and Galeazzo was glad to free himself from a load of expense by turning over Anichino Baumgarten and his three thousand Germans to Pisa which augmented her army to six thousand five hundred men-at-arms; an immense force for so small a republic to bring into the field in those days. Availing themselves of their superiority and feeling this ruinous expense, the Pisans believed it a propitious moment to make through papal mediation, an advantageous and honourable peace, and Urban V. being no less anxious to quiet Tuscany despatched Marco di Viterbo general of the Franciscans to accomplish this desirable object. Being honourably received at Florence, he was informed by the citizens that as they had been absolutely forced into the war by

* Fil. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. lxxxi.

Pisa in despite of themselves, no answer could be given until her propositions were known. A.D. 1364.

A great council of the Richiesti, amounting to more than a thousand citizens, was meanwhile assembled in order to silence the war party if peace should be determined on; but if possible, to avoid a shameful treaty the conditions of which were already secretly in possession of government. It was therefore resolved that the enemy's propositions should first be laid before this council by the papal commissioner and afterwards submitted to the seignory; before the Franciscan was sent for one of the priors rose and artfully hinted that they were not the authors of the present transaction for the last seignory had already heard of it, and that as the eight councillors of war were entirely ignorant of the matter they would proceed to explain not only the measures already taken for the ensuing campaign but also the means of their accomplishment; after which the financial state of the community would be submitted to the assembly by its treasurer Spinello della Camera.

One of the war council immediately rose and stated that for 70,000 florins they had engaged four thousand Barbute of the "Star Company" then in Provence, for six months; amongst whom were no less than five hundred gentlemen; and in Germany two thousand more, led by officers of distinction, besides three thousand men-at-arms already in the public service; that these troops were all to assemble at Florence ere the month was finished, and that the expense of this armament having been already incurred could not then be avoided.

The tendency of this discourse was strong towards war and it made an impression that the financial statement of Spinello confirmed: the revenue and expenditure were first broadly exhibited, and he then proved that when all these troops were paid up to the month of October the republic would have a debt remaining of only 166,000 florins. This favourable statement decided the question: Marco di Viterbo was called

in, the Pisan propositions were read, and found to be so haughty, insulting, and utterly inadmissible, that the assembly declared almost by acclamation first, for a reasonable and honourable peace if it could be made; and if not, then war and all its consequences *. Marco retired with this answer and assisted by ambassadors from Genoa Perugia and Siena, endeavoured to procure more reasonable terms from Pisa; but proud and confident in her assembled force and secret union with Galeazzo, she rejected every overture and threatened desolation to Florence if the original offers were not accepted. Thus doubly provoked the Florentines looked anxiously for the "Compagnia della Stella," whose arrival however Galeazzo had by bribery found means to prevent: but the two thousand Germans were true to their engagement, and Bonifazio Lupo whose talents and fidelity had already been tried, Tommaso da Spoleto, Manno Donati, Ricciardo Cancellieri and Giovanni Malatacca da Reggio, all able and experienced officers were engaged in their service. Henry de Montfort was already come, accompanied by the Counts John and Ridolfo of Suabia and five hundred men-at-arms, the most part gentlemen.

Thus inspirited, peace on such terms, was refused by Florence, and therefore on the thirteenth of April Hawkwood and Baumgarten with the Pisan army six thousand five hundred strong besides a thousand rural cavalry, marched by the Val di Nievole into the plain of Pistoia. These companies encamped separately and next morning the English made excursions as far as Prato, fought the inhabitants at their own gates, and with their accustomed audacity seized on the draw-bridge itself to the utter dismay of the citizens; not content with this a thousand of them marched by night to the Prato gate of Florence spreading alarms throughout the capital; and next day the whole white company together burst into the Mugello through the Val di Marino pass, with the intent of occupying

* Fil. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. lxxxii.

the plain of San Salvi by that route leaving Baumgarten to encamp alone at Peretola*.

While the Mugello suffered under their ravages Pandolfo Malatesta who had not yet relinquished his designs on Florence determined to enter that province with all the men-at-arms that were under his command at the moment: the council of eight forbid this and a dispute arose which ended in his taking with him a thousand men, but in company with Henry de Montfort who had strict injunctions to watch all his movements. After some time spent in plundering, the English were encountered and beaten by a very inferior force of Germans: it was a mere skirmish but remarkable for the personal prowess of one of Count Henry's followers, who dismounting with lance in hand is said to have unhorsed no less than ten Englishmen successively, of whom two were killed; the rest of the skirmishers fled and the whole company soon after retreated to the original encampment without succeeding in their object.

Malatesta still infatuated with his ambitious designs and a false notion of the Florentines' belief in the necessity of his presence, feigned urgent family affairs as an excuse for requesting some days' leave of absence; and was surprised to find his request not only granted for the time specified but for all the remaining period of his engagement. This was accompanied by a simple exposition of his past conduct and some threatening for the future if he persisted: Pandolfo instantly repaired to Florence and declared that however urgent were his affairs the public service was more so, therefore volunteered to remain with all his followers; but being coolly thanked for his goodwill, and his offers haughtily declined as unnecessary, he departed in disgrace and was replaced by Henry de Montfort until the Florentines were again simple enough to trust the conduct of their army to his uncle Galeotto of Rimini†.

* Fil. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. lxxxiv. † Fil. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. lxxxvi., lxxxvii.

When the English returned from their unsuccessful attempt on the Mugello the combined army spread over the whole plain of Florence: Sesto, Colonnata, the skirts of Monte Morello, San Stefano in Pane, and all the adjacent country were overrun as by a devastating torrent. The Petraia, now a royal villa, then belonged to the private family of Brunelleschi and was daringly held by the sons of Boccaccio Brunellesco against the whole Anglo-German army; disdaining to fly they gathered together a few family retainers and stood on their defence although absolutely surrounded by the hostile encampment. The Pisan general could not brook this insult: to be bearded in the midst of his squadrons by a few boys, and have every movement overlooked by the petty tower of a plain Florentine citizen was too much to bear, and a strong body of English was ordered to carry it by escalade: this command was blithely listened to, the men advanced with order and confidence, the attack was bold bloody and obstinate, but repulsed; the young Brunelleschi repelled all their efforts and baffled them on every side. They then retired; a detachment of Germans were led forward and, perhaps with some contempt for the beaten English, placed their ladders for the assault: mounting with great courage they met equal resistance and a similar fate; shame, wounds, and death attended them back to their astonished comrades. The disgrace was now equally divided between both nations, and both indignantly united in a third and more desperate assault; but all in vain; again both were beaten back in disorder by the indomitable Brunelleschi, and the attempt was relinquished*. Thus did a

* Scipione Ammirato, who resided and wrote the greater part of his history in the Villa Topaia, situated just above the Petraia, (given to him by the Grand Duke Cosimo I. for that purpose), tells us that it belonged to the Cardinal Ferdinand of Medici, and though he changed the rest of the building, he (Ammirato) believes that the tower was never altered. It therefore still remains a monument of the Brunelleschi prowess, and perhaps taste; for some, in the historian's day, were of opinion that the great architect of that family was its creator. It passed from the Brunelleschi to the Strozzi family, and then to the Medici, is still a royal villa, and full of fine

single Florentine family hold their paternal tower against a whole host of the best troops in Christendom, and had the ruling faction at Florence stifled its animosities and generally encouraged and ably directed so noble a spirit they might have mocked all the efforts of Pisa; but, says Villani, the envy and ill-will, and the little wisdom that then characterised the government obstructed every virtuous effort either of themselves or private citizens.

After this exploit the Pisan tents were struck and without opposition their inmates occupied the heights of Montughi, about La Pietra, and the opposite hills under Fiesole, spreading themselves even as far as Rovezzano in the plain of San Salvi: this movement filled the Florentines with dismay; they saw the English threat of ordaining a priest at that convent about to be fulfilled in a more serious form than their worst fears had anticipated: they were now surrounded by enemies and on the first of May beheld the combined armies descending in glittering columns by various roads from the Fiesoline hills towards the Porta san Gallo.

The space outside of this gate was in those days a populous suburb with a piazza or public market-place that occupied the site of that pleasant garden now called "Parterra," the gate itself being then covered and defended by an anteport which inclosed a considerable space and connected itself by flanking walls with the ramparts. Beyond these works, on three different roads Henry de Montfort had thrown up barricades; the first across a way leading to the church of Saint Antonio del Vescovo standing at a short distance westward of the gate; the second across that leading to the convent of San Gallo, long since demolished but which then stood to the eastward of the

paintings and statues; the gardens are magnificent, the view superb, the fountains full, brilliant, and sparkling, the terraces broad and noble, and the bronze statue of a bathing nymph, is one of John di Bologna's best productions.

Parterra not very far from the present Porta Pinti: the third lay athwart the south-eastern road which still runs along the ramparts: and there Henry de Montfort took post with all his men-at-arms.

No sooner was the enemy's movement known in Florence than her spirited citizens with greater courage than knowledge rushed in disorder from the town to the two first barricades, and taking post without order or discipline impeded the regular troops; nor could all the remonstrances of Bonifazio Lupo, Manno Donati, and other experienced officers induce them to retire, so that their gallant obstinacy involved the loss of both those positions with great slaughter before the day was done. As the German and English columns advanced, a gentleman from each nation, Everard and Cox, or Cook, broke from their ranks and walked composedly up on each side of the road until they reached the barricade: this and its occupants they seemed to hold in utter disdain, and performed such feats of valour in mutual emulation as kept both hosts in amaze until the attacking columns closed up and tumbled defences and defenders over and over like children and their playthings, with a severe punishment of the gallant but unskilful citizens. Everard pushed boldly forward but well supported, as far as the Piazza and even to the very bridles of De Montfort's chivalry; but they, says Villani, stood like a mass of solid iron and were never assaulted although showers of English arrows came rattling down like hailstones on the steel-clad men, thinning the civic bands and loose battalions, while feeble archery from rampart and barbacan might occasionally have startled the enemy's ears, (saith the chronicle) but did no other mischief.

The church of Saint Antonio with many surrounding buildings were soon in flames and the fight still raged with undiminished fury when Baumgarten in the true spirit of chivalry, amidst shouts tumult and conflagration, had himself dubbed a knight to the sound of trumpets and other instruments

as if in a great pitched battle. He then conferred the same honour upon Everard and others, and "*with such deafening cries as though heaven itself were thundering for the ceremony.*"

The conflict now slackened, the Florentines were compelled to take shelter in the town, a retreat was sounded and the enemy retired in perfect order to the hills and city of Fiesole where the installation of the new-made knights was celebrated by nocturnal revels in perfect keeping with the morning's achievements. Companies of various numbers from twenty to a hundred, every man with a lighted torch, danced round in circles interlaced and meeting; ever and anon they tossed their firebrands high in air and caught them as they fell; sometimes they joined hands and followed each other in circular movements with great order and lively shouts, and sounds of martial instruments. About two thousand of such torch-bearers were dimly seen like spirits in these midnight revels, while those on the plain seasoned their pastime by mocking the solemn gravity of the priors and mimicking the messages and hurried orders issued from the palace in seasons of public alarm. Besides these a third and more malicious party secretly conveyed some trumpeters into the city ditch near the gate of Santa Croce, who suddenly sounding an assault threw the whole town into confusion: the people ran to and fro without order or definite object, shouts cries and tumult filled every street; the women with more presence of mind lighted up their houses and amidst all their terror their screams and lamentations, managed to collect stones and other missiles on the window-sills and balconies to overwhelm the assailants; but Florence was for a while supposed to be actually stormed, until a detection of the trick restored tranquillity.

On the second of May the enemy broke up their encampment and crossing the Arno near a spot called Sardegna close to Florence posted themselves on the range of southern hills

from Arcetri to the Porta san Frediano which they dared to attack in the same manner as at San Gallo but were repulsed with loss from the barricades at the convent of Verzaia; for they had now been proved, and were found, says Villani, "*to be men, and not lions*," so that the Florentines met them hand to hand without flinching: after burning and plundering the beautiful heights of Bellosguardo, which then as now were covered with villas and gardens, their devastating march was directed towards the Upper Val-d'-Arno, whence, after another repulse and some loss at Terranuova and other places, they passed on towards Arezzo and Cortona, but finding the country cleared returned by the Senese territory, levying a contribution of 27,000 florins in their way towards the Val-d'-Elsa; then sweeping Val-di-Nievole retraced their steps and finished this devastating course at San Piero in Campo near Pisa. Here on a general review and muster of the army it was found that six hundred good men-at-arms had been killed and two thousand wounded, of whom great numbers soon after died, and thus ended the second Pisan campaign in the Florentine territory*.

Meanwhile the Florentines were far from idle; no sooner had they been relieved from the enemy's presence by force of arms, and according to Roncio the bribing of Baumgarten †, than under Marino Donati's influence they assembled a large force of citizens, volunteers, and mercenaries, to make a sudden inroad and revenge their recent injuries: on the twenty-

* Fil. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. xc.—Leon. Aretino, Lib. viii., p. 153, &c.—Poggio Bracciolini, Lib. i°, p. 23.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xii., p. 639.—Diario del Monaldi.—Cronaca di Donato Velluti, p. 103, &c.—Roncioni, Ist. Pisa, Lib. xv., p. 872.—Tronci, Annali. Pisa, vol. iv., p. 56.

† Baumgarten is called by the Italians Anichino di Monguardo, and Bongardo; as Hawkwood is Giovanni Acuto, Vanni Aguto, Auti, and Hacwd. (*V. Roncioni*, Lib. xv., pp. 872-3.) The Cronaca di Pisa (*Muratori Script. Rer. Ital.*, tom xv., p. 1045), says, that Abretto Tedesco and Andrea Dubramonte were the officers bribed; not Baumgarten; and that they had agreed to betray Pisa but were detected by Hawkwood, who gave timely notice to the Pisans, so that they were refused an entrance to the city, and soon after quitted the country with their followers and disbanded.

first of May De Montfort left San Miniato al Tedesco with fifteen days' provisions and ravaged the Pisan states as far as San Piero in Grado three miles from the capital where he encamped; but just at the same moment a company of fourteen hundred adventurers arrived at Pisa in search of employment, and for 2000 florins agreed to march against the Florentines: Manno Donati who had heard of their arrival and suspected the result urged De Montfort to cross the Ponte allo Stagno and attack Leghorn before they were upon him, as hampered by such a force his retreat would be difficult before the return of Hawkwood, and then impossible. De Montfort's knightly courage would not at first listen to such proposals, but being soon convinced of the danger he lost no time and passed the Fosso Arnonico; Donati instantly cut the timbers of the bridge at Lo Stagno, just before the new company made its appearance on the other side, and having served much in Lombardy and become acquainted with almost every condottiere, he soon recognised some old friends amongst the officers and induced them to quit the pursuit, in which they had no particular interest, with a promise to molest him as little as possible consistent with their engagement. They accordingly returned to Pisa while De Montfort marched on Leghorn, then an insignificant place, which along with Porto Pisano he captured; but fearful of his retreat being cut off if the enemy were to occupy the pass of Monte Scudaio near the left bank of the Cecena he continued his march for thirty-eight miles without a halt, and in four-and-twenty hours through bad mountain roads cleared the Scudaio pass four hours before the enemy reached it *.

The army was safe, but this successful inroad did not allay the shame and anger of Florence, who giving up all hopes of the Star Company and finding that the Germans and English had nearly finished the term of their agreement with Pisa bribed them both, the former with 44,000 the latter with

* Fil. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. xc.

70,000 florins not to renew it or molest Florence for five months but ravage the Senese states instead, and revenge the fate of Niccolò d' Urbino and the Cappelletto company. Thus the whole army of mercenaries were seduced fromPisa with the exception of Hawkwood and about eight or twelve hundred English who still found more advantage in remaining; but whether the talents of De Montfort were not found sufficient, or from a national dislike of transalpine commanders, the Florentines determined to replace him by an Italian, and appointed Pandolfo's uncle the aged Galeotto Malatesta who had a great military reputation, to command their armies *. This nomination was considered as a sort of salve for the wounded honour of Pandolfo, and Galeotto took the field in July, but not until he had extorted unusual powers from the government which they were still weak enough to concede and afterwards had abundant reason to repent of †.

On the twenty-ninth of July, the anniversary of the insulting mockery at Ponte-a-Rifredi, the whole Florentine army amounting to four thousand men-at-arms, eleven thousand infantry and three hundred Florentine gentlemen who served at their own charge, arrived after a night's march at the small town of Cascina about seven miles from Pisa. The weather was intensely hot, the soldiers tired; all threw off their armour, some their clothes, and numbers plunged at once into the cooling waters of the Arno: others half undressed lay fast asleep or gasping in the sultry shade scarce cooler than the sun, and all in various ways had abandoned themselves to rest with but little thought either of their own camp or the enemy. The general himself being old and sickly had also retired to bed without considering his vicinity to the "Foxes" of Pisa, and especially to the "*Old Fox*" Hawkwood. The camp was therefore carelessly barricaded and more carelessly guarded:

* Domenico Boninsegni, Hist. Fiorentine, Lib. iii., p. 575.—Roncioni, Ist. Pisa, Lib. xv., p. 874.—Cronaca di Pisa, p. 1045, Scrip. Rer. Ital. tom. xv.

† Boninsegni, Lib. iii., p. 526.

but Manno Donati ever on the alert, after visiting the position became seriously alarmed, and waking Galeotto urged on him so strongly the importance of greater precaution as to receive full authority along with Lupo and three others, for acting as he pleased. Manno immediately strengthened those defences that lay across the road leading through San Sovino direct to Pisa, reënforcing them with Grimaldi's Genoese crossbow-men, a detachment of chosen Florentines, some Aretine infantry and a body of hardy mountaineers from the Casentino. Hawkwood, who had instant and accurate intelligence of the negligence and disorder but not of the subsequent precautions, quietly assembled his troops at San Sovino four miles from the camp, pushing on a detachment to make several false attacks successively and then retire; this was repeated until Malatesta annoyed at such alarms ordered a watchman stationed on the belfry tower to sound no more without his orders whatever he might observe, under the penalty of losing a limb! So rigorous a command of course kept everything still, and Hawkwood thinking that his stratagem had succeeded stood still also until the declining but still powerful sun and a periodical westerly wind which generally accompanied it, should blind the enemy with dust and glare when he made his real attack. All this was considered skilful; yet he was blamed for setting at nought the four miles of a burning and dusty road that his troops had to pass, loaded with ponderous armour, before they got sight of the enemy. But trusting says the chronicle to his hardy English, born and bred in the wars of France, he encouraged them with the prospective ransom of three or four hundred Florentines, all opulent gentlemen, all ignorant of arms, and worth from 1000 to 2000 florins each as prisoners of war. The cavalry were ordered to dismount in order to raise less dust and march more silently so as to insure a complete surprise; and either from negligent spies, or treachery in Malatesta as was then believed, so it happened; but the fact of his

leaving the care of his camp with full authority to two such tried men as Manno Donati and Bonifazio Lupo must clear him from any premeditated treason. "Led, by those fierce inexorable English who were incited by their love of rapine" the first division advanced, and eight hundred of these islanders had already attacked the camp ere they were perceived, the sudden clang of arms and shouts of expected victory bringing the first notice of hostilities to the tired and negligent soldiers. In consequence of Donati's vigilance the guard was instantly up and engaged with the enemy; an obstinate struggle continued in front while Grimaldi's crossbows galled the English flank from some loop-holed buildings on the road side: the alarm now became general; Manno was first at the barrier, but seeing how things were, sallied from a different quarter at the head of some cavalry and attacked the other flank with great spirit: De Montfort soon followed, leading on the Feditori; Counts Giovanni and Ridolfo drove after him at speed, and the latter disdaining a mere defence dashed asunder the barriers, and charged with so rude a shock, and singly did such deeds that Villani is purposely silent lest they should be disbelieved as fabulous. The battle was obstinate, the assailants were charged and recharged through the whole depth of their ranks even to the waggons of wine and refreshments that had accompanied them, and after a gallant struggle against the whole Florentine army, broke and fled in all directions. We are not told why they were left unsupported; only that Hawkwood seeing his bravest division beaten, prudently retreated to San Sovino where the troops had left their horses; and then aware of the confusion in his rear, with the whole host of Florence rushing down upon him, continued his flight to Pisa. Malatesta was urged to follow; but on the contrary and not without supporters of this conduct, he discontinued the pursuit, declaring that "*He would not play a back game after once winning.*" Thus multitudes escaped, and especially English who had not even time to

draw the arrows from their wounds before they arrived at Pisa where many of them afterwards expired.

The following day the army moved towards that city, made some knights, and it is said celebrated games with the usual insults at Santa Anna Vecchia close to the town, but as this rests on the authority of some Pisan manuscripts alone it is disbelieved by Tronci*. Of the Pisan army more than a thousand were killed and two thousand made prisoners, the wounded are not mentioned, and only the native Pisans were retained; but Galeotto is accused of maliciously instigating the soldiers to demand "double pay and the month complete" a reward only given for pitched battles, and this for merely repulsing an attack that should never have been allowed to take place in the manner it did. The Florentines had indiscreetly given him the power of promising this recompense never dreaming that it would be so lightly bestowed, and Malatesta did so with the double satisfaction of putting them to 170,000 florins of additional expense and ingratiating himself with the soldiers. The people were thunderstruck and averse from paying a demand so enormous and unjust, but the troops were mutinous, threatening, and unmanageable, and Pisa being weakened by the late victory a fair occasion offered itself to Florence for a renewal of her former negotiations†.

At their return the soldiers refused to give up any captives

* Poggio, however, mentions the creation of knights, and the games and insults might therefore have followed as a natural consequence. Amongst other insults they are said to have hanged two rooks, two dogs, and two sheep, accompanied by a label on which was written "*Come cornacchie gridando veniste, come cani rabbiosi ci assaliste, e come montoni la fuga prendiste.*" Like rooks you came chattering, like furious dogs you attacked us, and like sheep you took to flight. Sardo dates this attack the 28th of July, and the year 1365, according to Pisan computation, and gives a lower number for the killed and prisoners.

† Fil. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. xcvii.—Leon. Aretino, Lib. viii., p. 155.—Poggio Bracciolini, Lib. i°.—Tronci, Annali, vol. iv., p. 60, &c^a.—Sardo, Cronaca Pisa, cap. cxxxi.—Roncione, Lib. xv., p. 875, et seq.—Muratori, Annali, An. 1364.—Cronaca di Pisa, Muratori, S. R. I., tom. xv.—Orl. Malavolti, Lib. vii., Parte ii^a, folio 127.

until satisfied about the fulfilment of their general's promise; the prisoners were then brought into the town but made to pay gate-tolls of so much a head as if they were cattle, and were otherwise treated with great indignity. They were subsequently lodged in the public prisons and afterwards compelled to build that roof against the modern post-office still distinguished as the "*Loggia*" or "*Tetto de' Pisani*"*.

With yet unsatisfied vengeance, as well as to strengthen the negotiations for peace, the army though still doubtful and mutinous, was ordered into the field: by the intrigues it is asserted, of Malatesta they refused to move from Montetopoli until again reassured of their pay, but satisfied on this point they occupied the country about Pisa early in August where a serious affray between a new company of English in the Florentine service and the German mercenaries, compelled the government to separate them, the former being sent to the Upper Val-d'-Arno where some fresh disturbance had occurred and the others under Galeotto to ravage the states of Lucca.

But the enormous and still increasing expense of this contest, the insubordination of the army, and the equivocal conduct of Malatesta, inclined all hearts towards peace and hastened the negotiations: ten Florentine commissioners were accordingly appointed to meet the Pisan ambassadors at Pescia, and both sides being sincere the treaty was soon arranged; but previous to its publication an event occurred which threatened to throw everything back into war and utter confusion.

Giovanni d'Agnello a Pisan merchant of little or no note amongst his countrymen had been sent as ambassador to Milan where the Visconti although friends with Florence were constantly plotting in favour of Pisa by whose assistance they hoped one day to gain a secure footing in Tuscany. But the Italian republics were not easily managed; the faction of to-day might be crushed to-morrow with all its machinations, and the

* S. Ammirato, Lib. xii., p. 646.

jealous mutability of the people forbade any permanent union with absolute princes on terms of real friendship or genuine equality. Individual citizens however, often found their interest in these connections, and therefore the Visconti were anxious to give Pisa a master, but one who should be completely subservient to themselves; and Giovanni d'Agnello, a man more cunning than wise, rashly presumptuous, and fond of revolutions, seemed admirably fitted to their purpose. They therefore offered to assist him in usurping the lordship of Pisa provided he would hold the government as their lieutenant giving up certain towns into their hands and continue the war against Florence*.

On Giovanni's return he proposed in council to elect an annual chief magistrate as a more secret and efficient form of administration in time of war, such as would give more confidence to their troops and allies and be especially acceptable to their old and faithful friends the lords of Milan; and to avoid any suspicion he forthwith proposed Piero Albizzo da Vico one of the most popular and honest of the Pisans for this office. Piero who had just been appointed to settle the conditions of peace sternly rejected the proposal and departed. This proposition was at first laughed at; but after several renewals, began to excite some suspicion of Agnello's motives, and the Raspanti fearful of Gambacorta's restoration by the conditions of peace, fell in with his views and hoped by creating him Doge to secure a chief of their own faction against the Bergolini. An attempt was finally made to arrest Agnello which he not only evaded with extreme cunning, but distributed a subsidy of 30,000 florins given by the Visconti in such a manner that with the support of some hired bands of adventurers and the mercenary aid of Hawkwood he occupied the public palace during the night of the thirteenth of August; then sending for the Anziani one by one, pretended to each that he had a

* F. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. ci.

divine mission for what he was about, and in obedience to such inspiration he found himself compelled as he said to assume the sovereign power with the title of Doge for at least one year. A.D. 1364.

These public functionaries thus roused from their sleep and surprised, not knowing what turn affairs might have taken, acquiesced in all his measures and promised through mere apprehension to support him. In this manner by force of arms, cunning, bribes, promises, and ultimate surprise, he was hailed Doge of Pisa by all the citizens on the following morning. Nor was this an ephemeral revolution; to consolidate his power Agnello united sixteen families of the Raspanti faction who had concurred in his election under the same name and arms, a golden leopard in a scarlet field, and under one single chief: he entitled them counts; decreed that one was to be annually elected Doge and when the proper moment arrived he would be prepared to resign his dignity.

But Agnello soon abandoned this title as too common and subordinate; savouring also somewhat too sharply of democracy; and took the more imposing one of "Lord of Pisa": he added to this the most pompous and absurd state; carried a golden sceptre, and commanded that petitions should be presented to him on the knee. Thus may be seen how easy it was even for a single citizen of no great talent but much gold and audacity, to overpower the turbulent and treacherous liberty of these republics, unsupported as they then were by a native military force and patriotic spirit, and trusting to the slippery faith of a parcel of hired robbers for their very existence*.

During these transactions peace was concluded at Pescia and published on the seventeenth of August†: Agnello would have

* S. Ammirato, Lib. xii., p. 647.—Fil. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. ci.—Cronaca di Pisa, p. 1046.—Sardo, Cron. Pisa, Libro cxxxii. — Roncioni, Ist. Pisa, Lib. xv., p. 877.

† "*Il Diario del Monaldi*," says 31st August, but this Diary, besides its meagreness, is very loose in its dates.

annulled the treaty but as yet dared not openly oppose the wishes of his own party whose kinsmen were still in the prisons of Florence; and even in the latter city there was some incipient murmuring amongst the lower classes of citizens. By this peace the ancient mercantile privileges of Florence were restored; Pietrabuona, that spark which at last fired the war-pile, was given up to the Florentines; their prisoners restored without ransom while those of Pisa in the gaols of Florence were to be paid for, besides 10,000 florins a year for ten years, to be brought to Florence on Saint John's day, which being the crowning festival when the tribute and homage of their subject states were publicly received in great form and ceremony, such payment assumed a similar character in the people's eyes and flattered the national vanity *.

Thus after an enormous expenditure of blood and treasure this unjust and foolish war was ended; but not its consequences. The peace was glorious for Florence because Pisa became tributary; but much mischief had been inflicted on the innocent of both sides; vast sums perniciously spent; more debt contracted; the country so ruined that in Florence new privileges and immunities were accorded to the old inhabitants and fresh settlers, to induce them again to cultivate the earth: no increase of territory on either side: many tears; more blood; widows; orphans; parents deprived of children; ruined towns, deserted hamlets, habitations desolate; olive-groves burned, vineyards rooted up; God's gifts and man's industry alike destroyed, the substance of both nations poured into the laps of unprincipled and rapacious foreigners; aliens in language and manners as in name; men who eagerly snatched the gift while

* Fil. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. cii.—Leon. Aretino, Lib. viii.—Scip. Ammirato, Lib. xii., p. 648.—Poggio, Lib. i°, p. 27. — Tronci, Annali, vol. iv.—Sismondi, vol. v., cap. xlvii.— Diaro del Monaldi. — Cronaca di Don. Velluti, p. 105. — Sardo, Cron. Pisana, cap. cxxxiii.—Roncioni, Ist. Pis., Lib. xv., p. 880.—Cronaca di Pisa, tom. xv., p. 1046.—S. R. I. Sardo differs from other authors in the amount and period of this tribute.

they robbed and murdered both the givers with equal indifference and afterwards remained on the soil as a curse, and a scourge, and a judgment. So true it is that the crimes of nations, perhaps even more surely than those of individuals, sooner or later turn and rend themselves.

CONTEMPORARY MONARCHS.—Changes—France: John the Good to 1364; then Charles V. (the Wise).—Popes: Innocent VI. to 1362; then Urban V. —Ottoman Empire: Orkhan to 1360; then Murad, or Amurath I.

CHAPTER XXV.

FROM A.D. 1365 TO A.D. 1374.

FROM the treaty of Pescia until the year 1368 little worthy of record took place in Florence; yet she was far from tranquil; for besides the storms of democracy that struck her, A.D. 1365. though not always with an unhealthy action, she shared the general troubles of Italy, the infliction of unretained condottieri and their ruffian bands, who attracted by gold and discord flocked like vultures to the spoil of that rich, beautiful and ill-fated country. France, half-ruined by English ambition; by excessive taxation; civil wars, famine and pestilence; and that memorable outbreak of the infuriated peasantry under the name of "*Jacquerie*," was in 1360 reduced to unmodified suffering; and yet further doomed by the rapid gathering of military robbers, even to the aggravation of this miserable condition.

After the peace of Bretigni swarms of these adventurers rose from the decaying armies of France and England, and spreading in masses swept broadly over the yet unplundered provinces. The luxurious Avignon glittered from afar a bright and tempting prize, nor was the high-priesthood any obstacle to these soldiers' rapacity: Mammon was their object, and they sought him with most confidence and least danger amongst the empurpled votaries of Christ's humility*. One

* On this subject see Petrarch's Letters generally. (De Sade, Memoirs, passim.)

of these companies lowered in the north, another flaunted in the south; a third approached more nearly, with protection on their lips but rapine in their hearts; both banks of the Rhone were infested; every enormity perpetrated; nor was it until Innocent VI. had disbursed 100,000 florins that he could rid himself of even one swarm of these devouring locusts.

In May 1361 the English or "*White Company*" of ten thousand men of all arms was thus purchased and turned over to the Marquis of Monferrato then at war with Galeazzo Visconte, and these adventurers thinking to escape from the plague which was devastating Flanders France and England, probably carried it with them to Piedmont, whence after being let loose on the Lombard plains it ran unchecked through northern and eastern Italy, and even the lofty castles on both Alp and Apennine did not escape its visitation.

The Visconti opposed no troops to either plague or enemy; a defensive war and perfect self-isolation were their arms: the castles of Monica and Marignano served as a refuge for these princes until the watchman placed by Bernabò to give notice of any stranger's arrival was found dead by the side of his alarm-bell; on this Visconte fled in terror to a small hunting seat in the depth of a forest where encompassed by a close palisade and numerous gibbets he threatened death to any who should dare to enter the forbidden ground. Invisible for a long time, and generally supposed to be dead, he cared little for the report, but remained thus sequestered until the danger had entirely ceased. It was one year later ere Tuscany became infected, until which period she stood free from misfortune and comparatively prosperous, while war between the church, Milan, and Monferato, added to her neighbours' suffering: but she did not finally escape. A general peace leaving the various companies idle in 1364, all those provinces not immediately under Florentine protection became their prey and Florence herself excited suspicions by a desire to keep faith

with them; yet even she was never sure of their word, and therefore kept a native force continually on foot for self-protection *. A.D. 1365.

Equally evading the entreaties of Tuscany and Avignon to unite in a league against them she thereby incurred Pope Urban's dipleasure; but to prove her devotion, voluntarily offered five armed galleys and five hundred Barbute as his convoy and escort to Rome; or else to receive him in Florence with due honour if he fulfilled his own and the general wish of once more residing in the imperial city.

About the same time a new company of freebooters under the denomination of "Saint George," commanded by Ambrogio, a natural son of Bernabò Visconte, assembled in Lunigiana and augmented the general troubles: Florence purchased peace for herself and subject states at 6000 florins, but in despite of treaties, papal anathemas, and every other impediment these barbarians managed to keep all Italy in tribulation. The Florentines though right willing to destroy them could do nothing without filling the country with others as dangerous as themselves, for no native force was sufficient to oppose them so completely had the military spirit been neglected and disorganised; and yet with such experience of the evil no public measures of general efficiency were ever taken by Florence against it although such captains as Manno Donati with the native spirit of her people, a spirit not yet extinct, would have made her independent of any alien soldier.

In this perplexity they sent frequent embassies, sometimes to Hawkwood and sometimes to Baumgarten, nominally to thank them for as yet uncommitted evil and confirm their plighted faith, but really to spy into their secrets and embroil them with each other. This policy seems to have succeeded, for the Star Company under Albert a German chief who had lately come to share the spoil of Italy, joined Baumgarten, pro-

* Matteo Villani, Lib. x., cap. xxvii., xxxiv., xliii., xlvi., lxiv.

bably invited by Perugia which was then worried by Hawkwood, and with twenty thousand cavalry attacked the latter on the thirty-first of July 1365. A long and bloody battle continued until night, terminated in the defeat of the English with a loss on both sides of three thousand men left dead on the field and fifteen hundred Englishmen led captive to Perugia.

The odds against which Hawkwood fought must have been excessive, for his company even when undiminished by plague or war numbered but ten thousand men of all arms, of which only six thousand were cavalry, and after suffering from these causes, separation, and continual hostilities, occasionally reënforced by new levies, withstood an army of twenty thousand cavalry alone, for the infantry are nowhere noticed: yet after this they were strong enough to retreat into the Senese territory and continue their predatory course until Albert and Baumgarten hired by that state again defeated them near Magliano in the Tuscan Maremma: Hawkwood then retired towards Genoa and uniting with the company of Saint George returned to the Senese dominions, but was finally compelled to retreat*.

Thus continually harassed Tuscany was anything but tranquil, and this disquiet produced an alliance for five years between Florence and Siena not only against external violence but if possible to cure the internal disorders of both states, principally arising from robberies so great and frequent as to destroy the miserable remnants of tillage that the condottieri had overlooked; wherefore the outlaws of one community were now to be considered as outlaws of both unless they happened to be citizens of either. This unhealthy condition of society does not appear to have been confined to the rural population alone, a lamentable failure in the administration of justice was loudly complained of in Florence and with such effect as to enforce the restoration of the "Capi-

A.D. 1366.

* Orl. Malavolti, Lib. viii., Parte ii°, p. 127.—Muratori, Annali, 1365.

tano del Popolo" an office which had been imprudently abolished thirteen years before for the sake of economy, when pressed by the Milanese war. It was a charge of great importance and utility if all its functions were performed, and these, as may be inferred from the titles of "Defender of the Trades and Tradesmen," and "Conservator of the Public Peace in Town and Country," were of no little consequence to the welfare of a manufacturing and commercial state. At the same period the podestà's council which had been augmented during the plague, probably to secure a sufficient attendance, was again reduced to two hundred members, forty popolani and ten nobles from each quarter; so that notwithstanding popular jealousy it would appear that the nobility still enjoyed a considerable portion of direct political power, as they must have done indirectly through their kinsmen who had entered the popular ranks without perhaps altogether throwing off family feeling or aristocratic spirit. After many fruitless endeavours to form a general league against the various companies, which failed for lack of Florentine coöperation and the unexpired treaties severally made with them, an alliance was at last formed in the month of February between the Pope, the Queen of Naples, Perugia, Todi, Cortona, Arezzo, Siena, Pisa and Florence; against all new companies that might thereafter make their appearance in Italy; and so indignant was Urban against those already in the land, that the Florentines were compelled to seek absolution for having dared to treat with Ambrogio Visconte after his malediction had been pronounced *.

William Grimoard abbot of Saint Victor de Marseilles, although not even a cardinal, and then on a mission to Naples as papal Nuncio, succeeded Innocent VI. in 1362 and under the name of Urban V. was the sixth pope since the removal of the pontifical court by Clement V. in the year 1305. The city of Avignon, small, dirty and disagreeable, A.D. 1367.

* Cronaca di Donato, Velluti, p. 112.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xii., p. 654.

as Petrarca describes it; was at least free from popular tumults and aristocratic turbulence: the pope and cardinals there enjoyed a repose that might be supposed the nurse of that religious contemplation so suited to their holy office, and yet its influence was far from beneficial either to themselves, their flock, or Christianity. The papal court became notorious for its excess in every vice that disgraces humanity, but as is asserted, with this distinction; that those immoralities which even then startled the common votaries of licentiousness in surrounding nations were so firmly fixed in Avignon as to lose their sinful character and with a polished surface bore men smoothly along uncensured and serene.

The epithet of "*Western Babylon*" by which this city was generally designated sufficiently marks the nature of its reputation in the opinion of the then most virtuous and enlightened characters: moreover the succession of Gallic popes; their constant residence in France, and a college composed almost entirely of French cardinals; all combined to reduce the pontificate to nearly a servile dependence on that throne; but as independence was in those days the mainspring of its power, the ecclesiastical dignity suffered, and an unfavourable impression was produced highly injurious to the spiritual influence of the popedom.

The union of high worldly power with the lowly character of Christianity, although theoretically inconsistent, may perhaps be practically necessary when the head of that religion is to control the moral actions of the world: a powerful monarch will be still more powerful with the keys of heaven in his hand, and a high-priest will be still more reverenced if he can make himself felt as well as heard. The religious influence of the early popes which sprang from and was supported by their virtues in a superstitious age, has waned with their power in a more enlightened one; and although temporal decay may not be the only cause, none will doubt that their spiritual thunders

would even now be far more effective if accompanied by a numerous artillery and some legions of veteran soldiers.

The papal residence in France excited indignation in Italy; other bishops were justly compelled to reside with their flocks; why, it was asked, did not the bishop of Rome show an example? Petrarca amongst others was loudest and boldest in his exhortations.

"Thou art," he says, "sovereign pontiff everywhere, but bishop exclusively in Rome! In thy absence she is the victim of civil and foreign war: Rome knows no repose; her houses are in ruins, her walls prostrate, her temples tottering; religion is neglected, laws are violated, justice despised; and the people in loud lamentation call on thy name with piercing cries; but deaf to their voice you show no pity for their woes, and the tears of thy spouse are unavailing!"*. This epistle which is written throughout with a boldness sometimes bordering on disrespect, was taken in good part by Urban and is supposed to have hastened his departure although from the moment of election he had declared his determination to return. But it is more than probable that the condottieri and their rapacious followers were the real promoters of this popular act for Avignon was now no longer tranquil nor even safe, and both citizens and courtiers had been frequently compelled to arm in defence of the city.

Although Urban had excommunicated Bernabò Visconte he was subsequently reconciled by the French king's mediation whose daughter Isabella had married his nephew Giovanni Galeazzo recently created Count of Vertù; but Bernabò's enmity to the church and its ministers, shown both in public wars and private spoliation, coupled with an utter contempt of her maledictions, rendered his conduct insupportable by a spirited pontiff: Urban therefore determined to realise his original intention and proceed to Italy where with the emperor's assistance

* Petrarca's Epist., apud De Sade, Lib. vi., p. 679.

he hoped to exterminate the Visconti as Urban IV. by means of another Charles had destroyed the house of Manfred. Aware however that foreign arms could effect little in Italy without native assistance, he first addressed himself to Florence, the most powerful and influential state of Tuscany, and accepted her offer of troops and galleys as a preliminary step to exhibit his friendly intentions. As early as 1365 he had concerted with Charles IV. about the manner of his return: the Infidels had already endangered Greece and the Emperor now visited Avignon, nominally to raise forces for the relief of that empire; but the crusading spirit had long evaporated and domestic quarrels blinded all nations even to the policy of checking Turkish aggressions, so that this conference only ended in what was much nearer to both their hearts, the settlement of Italian affairs and a close alliance against the Visconti.

Cardinal Albornoz was instructed to prepare a residence at Viterbo; the churches, palaces, and other buildings in Rome were put under repair; the condottieri were denounced; the flags and galleys of Venice, Genoa, Pisa, Florence and Naples enlivened the port of Marseilles, and finally on the thirtieth of April 1367 Urban V. with most of the sacred college quitted Avignon. Five cardinals would not stir; some went by land; and of those who did accompany the pontiff several saluted him with loud imprecations while the anchors were weighed the sails loosed and the rowers stretched out for Genoa *.

His arrival brought a moment of calm to that distracted city; faction for an instant was disarmed, a gleam of tranquillity overspread the place and the most deadly enemies united for a brief period to honour him. He then departed, and the tide of faction returned! But the fourth of June saw Urban welcomed by Albornoz and the Roman deputies on the shores of Corneto: there he was offered the lordship of the world's

* De Sade, Memoires, &c., vol. iii., Liv. vi.

capital with the keys of St. Angelo, and joy spread broadly over Italy.

Albornoz who had reduced La Marca, Romagna and almost all the ecclesiastical states to obedience; who in answer to Urban's demand for a financial account of his fourteen years' administration, sent him a cart loaded with the keys of conquered cities; became the man of all others on whom most reliance was placed for support but he unfortunately expired on the twenty-fourth of August; not however before he had concluded a league between the pontiff and almost every enemy of Milan. The emperor, the King of Hungary, the Queen of Naples; the lords of Padua Ferrara and Mantua, all joined in this confederacy: Florence alone refused to violate the peace of Sarazzana *.

Niccolò Spinelli the chancellor of Sicily had been previously despatched with letters from the pope to sound the Florentines on this point in his way to Naples; but avoiding any direct answer until Urban's arrival they sent Brunelesco, a notary and father of the great architect, to discover the emperor's intentions; first from his allies at Padua and Ferrara where Manno Donati and Ricardo de' Cancellieri were to procure every information, and then at Vienna, always following the imperial movements. The result was a direct refusal to join the league although strongly pressed by Urban who even tried to induce them with a personal assurance of his confidence; a confidence so perfect that he felt sure they would postpone even their most ancient friendships to the cause of God and religion, and therefore assist him in every emergency, but more especially against the house of Visconti which for fifty years, from the excommunicated Matteo down to the actual rulers, had been their enemy: the reigning brothers as he asserted, only waited for a favourable moment when they could

* S. Ammirato, Lib. xiii., p. 661.—Muratori, Annali.—De Sade, vol. iii., Lib. vi.—Sismondi, vol. v., cap. xlviii.

occupy Bologna and the ecclesiastical cities in Romagna, the great Florentine bulwarks, to pounce on that state and conquer Tuscany: he assured them that Charles would cross the Alps with a powerful army as the pope's champion, and attacking Milan hurl his disloyal vicars from their power while his victorious legions emancipated the rest of Lombardy: this cause he said had brought him to Italy; for this he had called the Florentines to Rome; and to this end he had now summoned them to his presence.

The simple answer of Florence was, that with the most devoted attachment to the church she was ever true to her engagements and would neither break her faith with Milan nor her treaties with the condottieri, but still preserving her attachment to the holy see *.

Urban was mortified and angry at this coolness, nor did her alacrity in despatching three hundred cavalry to his assistance in a sudden insurrection at Viterbo abate his displeasure: the sedition was quickly stopped and these forces recalled to subdue a revolt of San Miniato which being openly assisted by the Doge of Pisa had assumed a serious character. A new compact was drawn up and the government of that town according to Florentine policy reduced to a democratic form; but as the Sanminiatese nobles had considerable power and were as in other states usually joined by the malcontents of all parties, the peace did not last, and this revolt of San Miniato afterwards involved the republic in serious difficulties.

A.D. 1368. The imperial advent was now at hand and all Italy breathless with expectation: the Visconti being universally feared, hated, and distrusted, were thrown entirely on their own resources; for excepting Can Signore della Scala and the Florentines, almost every Italian state was against them; but Bernabò met the tempest with confidence, and Florence again despatched an embassy to meet the emperor and discover his real sentiments towards her. On the fifth of

* Cronaca di Donato Velluti, pp. 112, 114.

May he arrived at Conegliano with an immense army, varying according to different writers from twenty thousand to fifty thousand men, which when augmented by the confederates was sufficient to swallow up the Visconti; but Hawkwood and Can della Scala soon checked it by cutting the dykes of the Adige and Po and overflowing the Mantuan and Paduan districts. The confederates had invested Borgoforte which was defended by the former, and endeavoured to swamp it by breaking the superior embankment of the river; yet the English not only managed to turn the waters from themselves but by effecting another breach below the town destroyed the imperial camp and compelled an instant retreat*. This allowed time for negotiation and Bernabò who was bold, firm, and sagacious, confiding in the emperor's avarice, and secretly favoured by his sons-in-law the dukes of Bavaria and Austria who formed part of the imperial army, dazzled him with Milanese ducats while the less warlike Galeazzo employed his friend Petrarca in a negotiation for peace with Pope Urban's brother Cardinal Anglic at Bologna. The poet failed but Bernabò took a surer course; Charles began a parley, disbanded most of his soldiers, and after long delay with no successful exploits but great injury to his allies, finished by a close alliance with the very man whose whole race he was expected to annihilate!

So ended the hopes of Italy! The Visconti still towered in all their potency; the condottieri still revelled in all their licentiousness; and the single town of Borgoforte, restored to Mantua by treaty, was the only achievement of so numerous an army! Italy was indignant at this betrayal of the common cause; for the Visconti to maintain their own power and support their ambition were necessarily the great encouragers, either directly or indirectly, of the condottieri who ravaged it; and well might Petrarca exclaim "*Che fan qui tante pellegrine spade?*"† when

* Corio, Hist. Milan, Parte iii[a], p. 240.

† Why have we here so many foreign swords?

we learn from Corio and others that the Visconti's army was composed of Italians, Germans, English and Burgundians: that of the lords of Ferrara, Mantua, and Verona the same: the pope had Spaniards, Bretons, Gascons, Provençals and Neapolitans: and the emperor Bohemians, Sclavonians, Hungarians, Poles, and other distant nations: and thus was Italy devoured!*

Urban was confounded: the emperor's progress notwithstanding his peaceful aspect and diminished legions still carried along with it the usual disturbing force, and his immediate advance towards Tuscany was dreaded both by Florence and Pisa. Agnello the creature of Bernabò had kept aloof from the league, consequently feared and was anxious to propitiate Charles; he began a negotiation to confirm his actual authority with the dignity of imperial vicar in Pisa, and besides the revolted San Miniato offered Lucca in exchange; the great acquisition of his country and dearest to national glory! His terms were accepted, and the Lucchese who had never lost their attachment to Charles rejoiced in the bargain while the emperor felt that he was bartering an empty honour for a peaceful sovereignty which he could always turn into money by selling it to those most interested.

The Lucchese were now enabled under better auspices to renew their former offers of buying at an excessive price their lost independence, and to do it too despite of their long abasement, by the industry, the commercial wealth, and the credit of their fellow-citizens. For though injured oppressed and exiled, many had thriven amongst strangers without forgetting their native country, and now once more offered their resources for its ransom; nor did Charles altogether decline this union of thrift and popularity but took his own time and convenience to consider it. Lucca was finally delivered to Marcovaldo bishop of Augsbourg after six-and-twenty years of

* Petrarca, Canz. iv.—Corio, Parte iii^{a}, p. 240.—Muratori, Annali.

Pisan tyranny, and Charles entered it on the fifth of September 1368 amidst the shouts of a joyful people.

Near the town he was met by Agnello and his two sons whom he knighted with great ceremony, and on entering Lucca the whole company ascended a decorated platform whence the usurper was to be publicly declared Doge and Imperial Vicar of Pisa; but suddenly the spars gave way and the whole scaffolding came crashing to the ground: many persons were killed more wounded, amongst them Giovanni d' Agnello himself, whose thigh was broken and moreover his power annihilated by this luckless accident; for the news flew rapidly to Pisa and despite of all precautions excited a general revolt.

Under the patriot Albizzi da Vico before mentioned, the city soon echoed with shouts of "Long live the Emperor:" "Death to the Doge." The guards were overpowered, and even a part of the Raspanti joined the patriots, so that ere long a complete revolution was effected; all the exiles except Piero Gambacorta were allowed to return and Agnello with the loss of every present hope quietly relinquished his honours.

Gambacorta was at this moment with the emperor, for whose protection he had paid 10,000 florins, and in 1369, after a period of internal agitation somewhat curbed by a powerful armed association of patriotic nobles and citizens called the "Company of Saint Michael," his sentence of banishment was through imperial influence publicly annulled. Returning in triumph to the scene of his family's glory and misfortunes old enmities seemed for the moment to be forgiven if not forgotten, and the Gambacorti again shone amongst the most prominent citizens of Pisa. Faction however although repressed by Piero's prudence was far from still; few were so moderate or politic as their chief; the Raspanti, attacked and injured by his party, were succoured by him with seeming generosity while he sharply rebuked their assailants: one of the city gates remained still in their possession and seeing

themselves finally driven from political power they poisoned the emperor's mind against Gambacorta, and invited him to make a sudden attack upon Pisa itself and thus seize the government; an enterprise that would have succeeded but for the spirited defence of the people backed as is said by a seasonable supply of golden florins*. The sudden turn of Lombard politics gave Florence more cause of anxiety about the emperor's feeling towards herself; for she learned that he was not only angry at her refusal to join the allies, but accused her of having infringed the imperial prerogatives by occupying Volterra, Prato, and other places: in this perplexity she prayed for the pope's interference to prevent hostilities, and Urban displeased with Charles and disappointed by the failure of his own views, one of which was said to be the subjugation of Tuscany, seemed to favour her wishes and tried ineffectually, perhaps insincerely, to bring about a reconciliation. The imperial troops under papal banners made incursions on Florence, favoured the revolt of San Miniato, occupied that town, demanded the restitution of Volterra, besides other Florentine conquests; and without actually declaring war began a regular course of hostilities. This compelled the Florentines to arm; the sound of warlike preparation was everywhere heard; the roads were broken up, trade interrupted, and much injury and inconvenience suffered; but amidst all this there was a spirited refusal returned to the imperial demands, and a declared resolution not to surrender a single place or a foot of land to the German monarch, whom however they constantly treated with a respectful distant and determined coolness†.

* Cronaca di Donato Velluti, p. 115, &c^a.—Muratori, Annali, Anno 1368. Tronci, Annali. —S. Ammirato, Lib. xiii., p. 665.—Corio, Hist. Mil., Parte iii., p. 241.—Sismondi, vol. v., cap. xlviii. — Sardo, Cron. Pisa, cap. cxxxviii., et seq.—Roncioni, Ist. Pisa, Lib. xv., p. 889.

† Cronaca di Donato Velluti, pp. 117, 118, 124.—Poggio Bracciolini, Lib. i°, p. 27.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xiii., p. 665.—Domenico Buoninsegni, Ritratto dell' Istorie Fiorentine, Lib. iv°.

Although mistrusting Pope Urban's sincerity the restoration of Piero Gambacorta gave new confidence to Florence by securing her friendly relations with Pisa; yet seeing no alternative but war or a compromise with imperial rapacity and the former being the most serious and costly evil, she resolved to purchase forbearance with 50,000 florins; and the opportune arrival of Giovanni Malatacca da Reggio with a body of troops in their own pay accelerated the negotiation*. In 1368 Charles had been attracted to Siena by civil disturbances of which he intended to make good use, and therefore on his return from Rome began to intrigue for the supreme power: after some unsuccessful machinations he in January 1369 by the aid of a faction headed by the Salimbeni a rich and powerful race, attempted with three thousand cavalry to overpower both nobles and people but was gallantly beaten, made prisoner, and disgracefully turned out of the town without horses or money, except what the citizens somewhat too generously supplied out of respect for his dignity and the apprehension of future aggressions. Equally fearful of the still agitated Pisa Charles retreated to Lucca, resolving after he had extracted all he could from Tuscany to quit the Italian states, leaving Bernabò Visconte to execute the duties of imperial vicar both in that city and Pisa. This last resolution alarmed both pope and Florentines whose states were already too closely shouldered by Visconti's power, so that they exerted themselves to reconcile the emperor with Pisa and effect a treaty by which Lucca should be left an independent state, and Pisa free with a popular government, on payment of 50,000 florins, for which Florence engaged to become surety. A.D. 1369.

But the most lucrative bargain made by Charles was the restoration of Lucchese freedom after six-and-fifty years of unmitigated oppression, reckoning from the first usurpation of Uguccione della Faggiola in 1314 until the entire emancipation

* S. Ammirato, Lib. xiii., p. 666.

of that city in 1370, when the last payment of 300,000 florins was completed and the Cardinal de Montfort left Lucca a free and independent commonwealth.

During this long servitude she had lost her trade, manufactures, and populousness, but not her character: the whole province of Val-di-Nievole had been conquered or otherwise acquired by Florence and was never afterwards restored; her citizens were oppressed, exiled and impoverished; but the love of country, of liberty, and an unconquered spirit of national independence still remained.

Although five years of peace had blunted former animosity, as yet no symptoms of returning commerce between Florence and Pisa were perceptible; the latter could only be passive and the former at great inconvenience still continued to frequent the port of Talamone although in the disordered state of Tuscany this long line of transport was tedious uncertain and unsafe. About June therefore, after the Gambacorti became once more dominant in Pisa, this subject was taken into serious consideration and soon arranged, with a complete reciprocity of commercial privileges between the two republics: free trade was established in its most extended signification as regarded merchandise; for food of all kinds with the exception of fish seems ever to have been shackled; and to facilitate the conveyance of goods the present road along the Arno's bank was then in part if not wholly constructed*.

Charles returned to Germany in July but the malcontents of San Miniato, instigated first by the Patriarch of Aquilea, afterwards by De Montfort Cardinal of Boulogne and Governor of Lucca, and then supported by Bernabò, were still in open rebellion. Florence had come to an amicable arrangement with De Montfort on this point, but angry at the pope's banners being used against her, and seeing him fully occupied with the Perugians she broke the treaty and sent an army under Mala-

* S. Ammirato, Lib. xiii., p. 668.

tacca to besiege the place. The cardinal, indignant at this treachery instantly negotiated with Bernabò and effected an agreement between him the pope and emperor that for a certain sum paid to himself and the latter, his assistance against Perugia, and his promise not to molest the ecclesiastical states, he was to be made vicar of Lucca and San Miniato and the pope was to return to Avignon *. Bernabò therefore, having no scruples about breaking his faith interfered as vicar of that town, and being prepared for aggression, gave notice that if Florence persisted he should be compelled to move in its defence. The Florentines surprised and indignant at this proceeding from one for whom they had refused the alliance and provoked the anger of both pope and emperor, replied with spirit, that if peace were once broken he should not find them idle. In the interim Montaione, Canneto, Coiano, Castelnuovo, and San Guintino all dependencies of San Miniato, tendered their submission, while Volterra renewed her alliance and consented to the occupation of her citadel by Florence for another decennial period. Both parties being determined, Hawkwood who commanded the Milanese advanced from Sarzana, which had given itself to Bernabò, and taking up a position at Cascina watched his opportunity of raising the siege or at least succouring San Miniato now hard pressed by the Florentines. Malatacca, or according to Ammirato Bartolino di Losco of Reggio, maintained a strict blockade in so strong a position that Hawkwood was baffled; but the ignorant seignory mistaking the prudence of both generals for fear, insisted on a battle as the only successful way of conducting a campaign; a step which their general with equal pertinacity avoided as the most dangerous and unnecessary. Florence still indignant at Visconte's conduct hastily brought about a league between the pope and several Lombard states who along with herself combined for five years to make

* Cronaca di Donato Velluti, p. 124.

war on the Visconti and look to the general defence of Italy*.

A.D. 1370. Urban well pleased to see Florence at last so fairly engaged with Bernabò rebuked the Cardinal De Montfort for his precipitance and despatched two legates to the former chief with a bull of excommunication and declaration of war†. Visconte listened attentively while the document was read by the Cardinal of Belfort and the Abbot of Farfà who were charged with this delicate mission, and then quietly conducting them to the Ponte del Naviglio in the centre of Milan, "Choose," said he, "which you like best; to eat or to drink before you leave me." The prelates were silent; an angry and unscrupulous tyrant was before them, his guards and slavish populace around; all prompt to execute his wildest command. "Do not imagine" added he "that I will allow you to part without some refreshment likely to make you remember me." One of them casting a glance at the river replied "We would rather eat than ask to drink from so large a stream." "Very well," returned Bernabò, "you shall not leave my presence until you "have eaten the parchments on which these bulls of excom-"munication are written, the leaden seals that hang to them, "and the silken ribands with which they are tied." It was in vain that the legates claimed the rights of ambassadors, or urged their sacred calling; nothing would avail; in presence of the court, the guards, and all the citizens, they were compelled to finish this indigestible feast, and then sent out of the country.

The Florentine general, after repeatedly proving from the strong position of the besiegers, that Hawkwood could effect nothing in favour of San Miniato without bringing up his whole army, and even then to certain defeat, was peremptorily ordered on the first of December 1369 to quit his entrenchments and give battle. With some words expressive of his

* Poggio Bracciolini, Istoria, Lib. i°, 669.
n. 27.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xiii., p. † Cronaca di Donato Velluti, p. 126.

admiration of the ancient Romans who left their generals uncontrolled, he unwillingly obeyed, came up with tired soldiers, attacked, and by a successful stratagem of Hawkwood's was totally defeated and made prisoner on the Fosso Arnonico. The camp before San Miniato was immediately reënforced from Florence, and so strong was the position that Hawkwood even though victorious never attempted it, but appears to have thrown a small body of troops into the citadel: on the contrary he overran the neighbourhood of the capital, even to the very gates, with the usual concomitants until the ninth of January when by means of an inhabitant of low condition named Luparello, the long-contested San Miniato fell into the hands of Count Robert of Battifolle after a hard struggle with the garrison *.

The joy for this conquest was extreme in Florence; the community being exasperated not only on account of the revolt and obstinate resistance, but because it had entailed a new war on the commonwealth with the most formidable opponent in Italy. The prisoners were therefore insulted and their lives endangered; several of the ringleaders beheaded and many more banished; amongst others the family of Borromeo afterwards so revered and distinguished in the city of Milan. Ridolfo da Varano now succeeded Count Robert of Battifolle in the command of the Florentines, and so little apprehension do they appear to have had of Hawkwood that eight hundred horse were despatched under Manno Donati to join the Lombard army and show Bernabò Visconte that Florence was not only able to defend her own dominions but molest him also where he least expected her †.

Nor was the latter idle: assembling a considerable force he made a diversion in Tuscany, attempted to surprise Lucca and

* Poggio dates this in 1368, but is at variance with all other historians.

† Cronichetta d' Incerto, p. 195.— Diario del Monaldi. — Cronaca di Donato Velluti, p. 127. — Poggio Bracciolini, Lib. i°, p. 27, &c^a.—Leon. Aretino, Lib. viii. — S. Ammirato, Lib. xiii., p. 671.—Muratori, Annali.

afterwards Pisa, from whence he was gallantly repulsed by the citizens and a body of Florentine auxiliaries, the whole commanded by Piero Gambacorta who for that night's conduct was invested by the ruling faction (which was his own) with the supreme power of the republic, and thus recovered all the influence of his family along with the ancient authority of the Gherardeschi. Thus baffled Hawkwood pillaged Leghorn and ravaged the Maremma, but finally retreated before a strong division of the league which was brought across the Apennines to oppose him, and returned by Sarzana into Lombardy. Florence wishing for her own interest to see Lucca at liberty paid the remaining 25,000 florins due to the emperor and enabled De Montfort to rid himself of his onerous charge: the cardinal departed on the twenty-fifth of March and thus she had the satisfaction of completing the freedom of Lucca and at the same time strengthening her own party by uniting both that city and Pisa to the confederacy. But as scarcely a man in Lucca remembered her palmy days of freedom except as a tradition, Florence was obliged to provide statesmen for the arrangement of her new constitution on the Florentine model; also with money and even engineers to demolish the stronghold of all her tyrants the citadel palace of Agosta, at the destruction of which the citizens worked with all the spirit of new-born liberty *.

After Hawkwood's retreat the auxiliaries returned to Lombardy with Manno Donati's division of Florentines who very soon distinguished themselves at Reggio where their leader fell a victim to his exertions: some time after this success all sides began to talk of peace which Bernabò was ever ready to make or break as it suited him at the moment; but this object was more quickly obtained in consequence of the defeat of the Florentine division under Rosso de' Ricci by Hawkwood, so that a treaty was signed at Bologna on twelfth of November without any greater

* Poggio Bracciolini, Lib. i°, p. 29, &c. — Leon. Aretino, Lib. viii. — S. Ammirato, Lib. xiii., p. 675. — Sismondi, vol. v., cap. xlviii.

consequences to Tuscany than a closer union between the Florentine, Pisan, and Lucchese republics, which naturally gave the first a more powerful influence throughout that province. It also reconciled the Florentines with Urban V. who tired of Italian disorders was less anxious to revenge the insult offered to his representatives than to return to the calmer enjoyments of Avignon.

Without giving any other reason than a wish to reconcile France and England he prepared to leave Italy where he received obedience respect and reverence even to a belief in his power of performing miracles; where he had completed the victorious march of Albornoz, and saw the ever-turbulent Rome with all the ecclesiastical patrimony at his feet, Perugia alone excepted, which he was however attempting to subdue, and which now deprived of Bernabò's aid was, by the mediation of Florence, soon after reconciled and submissive. Urban's lowliness was exemplary and yet he had been greatly tried: on entering Rome the emperor met him, and instantly dismounting, humbly took the bridle of his white palfrey and conducted him with profound reverence to the cathedral. Coluccio Salutati * in a letter to Boccaccio describes the variety of impression made on the Romans by this unusual act of humility. "The Roman prelates in the papal suite were delighted to see their chief so honoured; the Roman people rushed in exulting crowds to behold the two monarchs of this world in so intimate an union; the lovers of peace could scarcely satisfy themselves with a spectacle that excited their warmest devotion: but those who put an evil interpretation on everything attributed this act of submission to the emperor's pusillanimity. Some said that it was a feigned humility, and the enemies of the church either turned all into ridicule or openly condemned it. For myself I was intoxi-

* Coluccio, one of the ablest men of his day, and afterwards secretary to the Florentine republic, held at this time a high official situation in the papal court.

cated with joy; I could not contain myself when I beheld what our fathers had never seen and what we dared not have even hoped for; the pontificate in union with the empire; the pulpit obedient to the spirit, and the monarchy of the earth submissive to the monarchy of heaven."

The love of country, the ceaseless turmoils of Italian politics, the climate; and above all the wearing persuasions of French cardinals who languished for the soft and sensual tranquillity of Avignon, were too much for the man who without having been ever seduced from his natural humility saw the emperor of the west at his stirrup, and afterwards the emperor of the east at his footstool, renouncing all schismatical opinions, and reverently acknowledging his supremacy.

There indeed seems to have been but one opinion of this pope, yet supposing the charge of secretly aiming at the subjugation of Tuscany to be true, religious zeal would scarcely be distinguishable from temporal ambition. His enjoyment of tranquillity was brief; for embarking at Corneto on the fifth of September and arriving on the twenty-fifth, he died on the nineteenth of December 1370. On feeling the approach of death he ordered the doors of his palace to be thrown open; the people entered and beheld a pope calmly and contentedly expiring on a miserable bed, dressed in the humble habit of his order which he never quitted, and leaving the world with perfect confidence and resignation.

"He was," says Petrarca, "an excellent man adapted to every sort of good; because he was neither blinded by ignorance nor her sister inexperience; nor enervated by luxury or love of women; but it is more difficult and more rare to persevere in a great work than to undertake it; he sinned from excess of complacency to those about him. But how could he help being entangled in the snares which they set for him, shut his ears to their insidious councils, or resist all the attacks which they made? Is it not navigating against the wind? Can

this be done without the aid of several rowers? And those whom he had with him, far from opposing, followed the leeward course, searched for rocks and wished for shipwreck" *.

When the Florentines heard that cardinal Count de Beaufort nephew of Clement VI. had assumed the pontificate under the name of Gregory XI. an embassy was sent to congratulate him both by them and Perugia, and to beg his ratification of Urban the Fifth's treaty with the latter state by which that republic became pontifical vicar and virtually independent. But a decided refusal to be bound by the acts of his predecessor coupled with the intelligence that the Cardinal of Burgos had taken advantage of a famine and other public calamities to occupy Perugia, alarmed Florence about the pope's ulterior objects and occasioned an attempt to form a provisional confederacy with Siena Pisa Lucca and Arezzo, against future ecclesiastical encroachments. Pisa and Siena declined any alliance independent of Avignon; and a league, although not exactly what the Florentines wanted, was at last concluded under the auspices of Cardinal Anglec Vicar-General of Italy, for four years from the twenty-fourth of October; the obnoxious cardinal having in the interim been removed from Perugia. A.D. 1371.

External peace became as usual at Florence the prelude to internal war; not the sanguinary encounters of former days, but with passions equally strong, selfish and remorseless: Uguccione de' Ricci to the people's entire satisfaction became gonfalonier of justice in September; his unmitigated opposition to Piero Albizzi and the law of admonition had made him extremely popular, and his modification of that law in 1366 was fresh in the public mind: expectation therefore hung anxious on his present power, but Ricci no longer appeared

* Cronichetta d' Incerto, p. 198.—Dom. Buoninsegni, Lib. iii., p. 536, &c.—Muratori, Annali, Anno 1370.—De Sade, Mem. vol. iii., Lib. vi., pp. 769, 771, 773.—Sismondi, vol. v., cap. xlix.

as the popular champion that the people had been accustomed to behold so zealous in their cause and whose present poverty indicated his former integrity. This was at first attributed to age, to indolence, the worry of straitened circumstances; to anything except infidelity; but a whole people is seldom long deceived and it was soon whispered that he had secretly reconciled himself to the Albizzi by the persuasion of Carlo Strozzi, the most able and active as well as one of the most potent of that party. Clandestine visits passed between them in which it was said that Strozzi used all his powers of eloquence to seduce him: he contrasted the aristocratic folly in losing, with the popular sagacity in still retaining supreme authority in their hands; and more especially lauded the then ruling faction which by prompt and skilful management was yet able to hold itself superior not only to the nobles but to the legion of upstart citizens that had gradually entered nay almost usurped the government and who if successful would in their turn be ousted by a new political generation. He instanced the actual seignory which excepting themselves and two others, was composed of the lowest order of citizens the exclusive offspring of the Divieto, alike strangers to the city and its ancient inhabitants; to oppose these alone the admonition had been set in motion and was in fact the strongest support of the popolani. He then ridiculed the folly of Ricci in permitting a mere family feud to injure the Party Guelph and his own kindred instead of letting them thrive like Piero Albizzi who only from favouring that magistracy now governed the state and saw his son a cardinal, while he himself was followed and courted by all the world. He inquired what had been gained either to Ricci or his race by the long-cherished epithet of "*Lover of the Public Good*," and urged him to unite so intimately with Piero as to share those riches and honours that the church would shower upon his family like rain from thunder-clouds, by means of this coali-

tion; and instead of being pressed and poor he would become wealthy and powerful.

With some such reasoning it was believed, perhaps more from the effects than oral information, that Ricci allowed himself to be seduced, and ere long one of his sons was distinguished by places and pensions from the legate of Bologna; another received a benefice, and Uguccione himself gave no further molestation to the Guelphic party. The people felt they were sacrificed, crucified as it were between two thieves, and the outcry became loud and general, more especially as the cardinal legate's ambition had already become a subject of great suspicion and alarm to most of the citizens who saw with impatience their leading families within his corrupting influence*.

Thus for a while the strife between these potent rivals virtually ceased but not the struggle of their factions: the Albizzi were further strengthened by the accession of Benchi de' Buondelmonti a nobleman who for his good service in the Pisan war had been admitted to the privileges of a commoner but without changing his name or renouncing his family: he had been drawn for a prior, but when about to officiate, a new law aimed exclusively at him declared any noble-popolano unless he changed both name and arms, ineligible to the seignory under twenty years from the date of his translation. Disappointed, and indignant at this blow which came from the lower class of citizens, he instantly joined the Albizzi and brought, besides the force of his aristocratic influence, a fresher and more angry spirit to the admonitory power; and thus many nobles stifling all former enmity willingly seconded the designs of great popular families.

Between members of the Party Guelph the sacrifice or safety of individuals became a simple matter of barter; the friends of

* Dom. Boninsegni, Lib. iv., p. 354. —March. di Coppo Stefani, Lib. ix., Rub. 725, 726.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xiii., p. 678, &c. — Leon. Aretino, Libro viii.

one were condemned or exchanged for an equal value on the other side, but not always peaceably or without external agitation. It is now scarcely possible to trace the immediate bearing of the separate ruling departments of Florentine administration upon each other or estimate the relative power of all the springs that moved it; insulated facts frequently start into life from the pages of old historians and indicate certain connexions and dependencies in the machine of government, then universally familiar and therefore barely alluded to, not explained; which throw a variable, chequered, and altogether unsatisfactory light on the subject, extremely embarrassing even to well-informed Florentines. One of these difficulties is the legal or assumed authority of the Capitani at this epoch: that their power was excessive is evident, whether used individually or as a body, but how it acted on other wheels of administration is hard to say, because a single member, and he of the weakest faction, seems by an effort of determined audacity to have controlled one of the gravest of the national councils. A citizen named Zanobi Macinghi who happened to be obnoxious to Rosso de' Ricci having been drawn as gonfalonier of a company was marked by him for admonition: his petition to this effect however failed three times successively in the "Council of Twenty-four," so that the chairman refused to repeat the attempt. Enraged at this Rosso declared with violence that he would reiterate the charge a hundred times if necessary: not succeeding in this he procured a council of Richiesti to be immediately summoned; but whether by virtue of his own official authority or through individual or party influence with the seignory is one of those points on which we are not enlightened. After sitting all night the council were induced from mere exhaustion to consent that Zanobi should be declared a Ghibeline. Although not easily comprehended, this might have been a forced but legitimate exercise of parliamentary forms and tactics artfully managed to worry the assembly into a vote of censure and deprivation

A.D. 1372.

against an obscure individual for whose welfare few of them cared; but the next act of the Capitani was more decided, and proves that whatever might have been the forms of political liberty in Florence its substance had ceased to exist for any except the dominant faction; and that what the Florentines called liberty was the licence of driving their political adversaries from power if they could; not by public opinion or intellectual superiority, but by force of arms.

One of the Ricci faction named Bartolo Siminetti banker to the wealthy mercantile house of Guardi, which had just failed for 120,000 florins, was so shaken by their fall as himself to totter on the verge of bankruptcy when Carlo Strozzi and another of that party came forward to sustain him, and in return received his grateful conscientious and most zealous support. Increasing public dissatisfaction about the Capitani induced them to propose a law forbidding the seignory to deliberate upon any bill affecting the Party Guelph for good or evil, unless it had been previously discussed and approved by that magistracy. This was a bold attempt to take the supreme government by storm, to annihilate its legislative powers, stifle public opinion, and exalt themselves high above all human responsibility. The proposition was of course rejected, but the Capitani, being present, menaced its opponents with admonition as Ghibelines; this accusation was successively repelled by all the dissenting priors; the petition went a second time to the vote and, the ballot being secret, with the same result. Upon this Siminetti and Buonaiuto Serragli, both priors, started up and the former in a bold insolent tone for which he was noted, cried out "We will soon find out who gave these white beans and therefore who are the enemies of the Party Guelph"*. Then walking up to each member he sternly demanded if he were a Guelph, which none being willing or able to deny, at once

* It should be remembered that the mode of balloting in Florence was the reverse of ours, black beans meaning "*Yes*," and white beans "*No*."

breaking through all forms of constitutional law, he forced every individual to give his black bean openly, and thus carried the motion, to the consternation of all good citizens*!

Without having been admitted behind the curtain or knowing the by-play and underplot of this extraordinary scene it is scarcely possible to conceive how the supreme executive and legislative government of the Florentine republic (for in the seignory both were united) could have allowed itself to be thus awed into a direct violation of all fundamental laws and principles; and this by the audacity of a single man, even supported as he was by the power of a formidable magistracy and an audacious faction! It proves what height that power had attained and how deeply its baleful shadow affected the commonwealth; yet national spirit was aroused, for the open violation of public decency alone, even in trifles, may often raise a louder burst of feeling than more solid matters, to whose gravity all are not sensible; but in this audacious act the vitality of freedom was involved in addition to the unseemly outrage, and a broad blast of indignation ruffled the surface of society.

Men soon began to congregate, covert meetings were held under false pretences; for it was a capital crime in Florence for more than twelve persons to meet in secret; and a new seignory favoured the public wishes. The gonfalonier for March and April was Andreà Mangioni, a fierce adherent of the Albizzi; but the priors were men of another stamp; one, Giovanni de' Mozzi, was an open foe to admonition and an uncompromising enemy of both factions: with him therefore Lapo di Castiglionchio, Salvestro de' Medici, and six other citizens, all of whom except two had been gonfaloniers of justice, conspired against the present misrule; and these were speedily followed by a hundred more, all men of rank and ability disgusted with existing circumstances. The first meetings were

* Mar. di Coppo Stefani, Lib. ix., Rub. 730.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xiii., p. 681.

held on pretence of visiting Simon Peruzzi an associate, who feigned sickness; but being soon detected by their lynx-eyed adversaries they were immediately denounced and this at once decided them to meet openly in the church of San Piero Schereggio: here the state of public affairs was fully discussed by the assembly, which afterwards adjourning in a body to the public palace one of them addressed the seignory as follows *:

"Many of us doubt, most excellent seignors, the propriety "of our having thus assembled by private requisition although "for a public purpose, lest we should be either noted as pre-"sumptuous or, being ambitious, condemned. But when we "consider that day by day others without hesitation assemble "in their houses and porticos, not for public utility but their "own private ambition; we do think that as they fearlessly "meet for the ruin of the commonwealth those who now unite "for the public benefit have no cause of apprehension; nor "are we tempted to seek for or listen to what others may re-"port of us since they openly disregard our judgment. The love "we bear our country, magnificent seignors, first induced us "to deliberate, and the same love now brings us here before "you to discuss that evil which though already of such magni-"tude is yet fearfully increasing; and then to offer our best "assistance for its destruction. This, however difficult it "appear, may be easily accomplished if you will only banish "all private feelings and support with public force your own "legitimate authority. The common corruption of all the "Italian cities has extended and still extends to ours; because "from the moment this province threw off the imperial yoke "its several states, relieved from a correcting power, have not "as free united communities, but as cities split into factions, "ordered their respective governments, and from these proceed "all the other evils, all the other disorders that now pervade

* Marchionni di Coppo Stafani, Lib. ix., Rub. 731.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xiii., p. 682.—Macchiavelli, Lib. iii°.

" them. No union, no friendship, is to be found in their citi-
" zens, excepting among those that are conscious of some crime
" either against individuals or their native country: and be-
" cause in all, both religion and morality are extinguished;
" oaths and plighted faith are only valued as additional instru-
" ments of treachery; and the more certain and easy the mode
" of deception so much the more praise and glory is acquired.
" Hence scoundrels are praised as industrious, and good men
" blamed as fools. And verily all those things which most
" tend to corrupt others seem now to have nestled in the
" Italian cities: the young men are idle, the old lascivious;
" and every age and every sex are saturated with immoral and
" disgusting customs for which good laws, spoiled from mis-
" usage, bring no relief. Hence arises that mercenary greedy
" character which is seen in the citizens, and that appetite not
" for true glory, but disgraceful honours, on which hang enmi-
" ties, quarrels, malice and factions; and these again generate
" death, exile, affliction of the good, and exaltation of the
" wicked. For the virtuous, confiding in their innocence, do
" not search like the vicious for patrons who will defend and
" promote them; so that being unprotected they fall and are
" ruined. From such examples spring the power and spirit
" of faction; because the vicious through cupidity and ambition
" and the virtuous from necessity, are compelled to follow
" them. But a greater evil springs from seeing the leaders
" and promoters of faction by hypocritical expressions of piety
" morality and honesty, clothe in a decent exterior their most
" infamous objects and intentions: and it ever happens,
" though they are all enemies to freedom, that whether under
" the name of nobles or popolani, in artfully appearing to
" defend they really trample on it; for the expected pre-
" mium of victory is not the liberty of their country, but the
" pleasure of having beaten their opponents, and the enjoy-
" ment of that power which the latter were thus compelled to

" relinquish; and thus tempted there is nothing so unjust, so
" cruel, or degrading that they will not dare to do. Hence
" laws and regulations, not for public but private advantage,
" are made and promulgated; hence war, peace, truces, and
" alliances are all undertaken, not for the glory of the many
" but the passions and interests of the few. And if the Italian
" cities be filled with such disorders Florence beyond all others
" is thus tainted: her laws, her statutes, her civil regulations,
" ever have been and still are ordained, not according to the
" wants of a free community but to suit the ambition of that
" party which happens at the moment to be uppermost.
" Hence it follows that when one faction is driven from power
" or one sect extinguished, phœnix-like another soon rises
" from its ashes; for in those cities that maintain themselves
" by parties and not laws, the moment one faction remains un-
" opposed, it immediately divides against itself, as there is
" then no protection from those private intrigues of which, in
" self-defence, it was the original projector; and that this is
" true both the ancient and modern divisions of our own city
" demonstrate. Every one imagined when the Ghibelines fell
" that the Guelphs would live long and happily together;
" nevertheless, after a little while the Bianchi and Neri divided
" them; and when the Bianchi were conquered the city was
" not the less troubled by faction, for either by favouring
" exiles, or from the hatred of nobles and popolani, struggles
" never ceased. And then to bestow with unparalleled gene-
" rosity on others that which we could not or would not enjoy
" together in harmony, we strangely surrendered our liberty;
" first to King Robert, afterwards to his brother, then his son;
" and lastly to the Duke of Athens. But like those who can-
" not agree to live together in freedom and yet will not be
" slaves we are never a moment in repose; nor had we any he-
" sitation, (so prone is every class among us to discord) while
" still under King Robert's rule in displacing his royal majesty

" for one of the vilest inhabitants of Agobbio! The Duke of " Athens, for the honour of this city, ought not to be remem- " bered; but his cruel tyrannical disposition should for once " give us a lesson of wisdom and teach us how to live. Never- " theless before and subsequent to his expulsion, we, as is our " wont, quarrelled and fought with each other; nay using against " ourselves the very arms so lately united to drive the tyrant " from our walls, and even with greater fury and hatred than " before. Our ancient nobles being subdued and compelled to " bow before the people many believed that there would never " be more cause of disturbance, seeing that those were bridled " who by their haughtiness and insupportable ambition occa- " sioned it. But now we see by experience how fallacious is " man's opinion, how false his judgment! The pride and am- " bition of the great were not extinguished, only wrested from " them by our richer citizens, who now, as is the custom of " ambition, aspire to the highest rank in the commonwealth, " and who having no means of success but discord, again " disturb us; so that the forgotten names of Guelph and " Ghibeline, the curse of this republic, are again revived. " Heaven wills it, in order that there may be nothing quiet " or stable in human affairs, that in every state certain fami- " lies exist which seem created for its destruction, and in " these our own republic abounds beyond all others, for not " one but many have distracted it. First the Buondelmonti, " then the Uberti, afterwards the Cerchi and Donati; and " now; oh how ridiculous! the Ricci and Albizzi forsooth " disturb and divide the city! Most excellent seignors, we " have not cited the depraved manners, the corruption, the " ancient and continual discord of our ancestors, to intimidate " but only remind you of their source; and show that as you " can easily recal these things to your own memory so have we " not forgotten them. And we tell you moreover, that the " examples of those times need not make you diffident about

" being able to curb the present; for then the ancient families " were so powerful and so favoured by princes that the common " regulations of society proved insufficient to restrain them; " but now that the empire is weak, the pope no longer formid- " able, and that this city and all Italy are arrived at a relative " state of equality sufficient to sustain ourselves; there will be " no difficulty in the execution; our own republic especially, " despite of ancient examples to the contrary, not only can " maintain its unity but effect a complete social reform, pro- " vided you, O magnificent seignors, proceed zealously to the " task which we, moved by pity for our country not any private " inducement, now advise; and though the corruption be deep " you can at once destroy that evil which infects us, that frenzy " which consumes us, that poison which is killing us: impute " our ancient troubles, not to human nature but to the times, " which are always changing, wherefore through better regula- " tions you may hope for our city a better fortune. The malig- " nancy of these times may by prudence be conquered if you " will only curb the ambitious, annul those regulations which " are the nurses of faction, and replace them by others more " conducive to real liberty: and may you be pleased rather to do " this now, by virtue of existing laws, than be compelled here- " after by a people driven to accomplish it by force of arms "*.

This speech only declared in plain expressions what everybody felt to be truth: the priors were willing to comply and assemble a council of the Richiesti before which both the public grievances and the accusations against citizens were to be laid. To this proposition Jacopo Guacciani of the Albizzi faction objected as unnecessary and dangerous to public tranquillity; but proposed that the delinquents should be at once given over to the podestà and suffer the penalty of their crime. Filippo Bastari then answered that if to meet for the purpose of exhibiting the dangerous condition of the state before its supreme council

* Macchiavelli, Lib. iii°.

were a capital crime, he confessed to having committed it and so rendered himself obnoxious to the law, for he was one of those who in San Piero Schereggio resolved to implore the seignory's aid in defence of their common country then on the brink of ruin. If the letter only of the law were attended to he might be at once turned over to the executioner; but if in a free city the mouths of free citizens lovers of their country ought not to be stopped, he who in defiance of private enmity boldly came forward to expose the public danger should be rewarded. He therefore demanded, not reward; for a good citizen wanted none in his country's cause; but that they would cast away passion and personal interests and apply effective remedies to the grievances complained of. "You are now" said he "become " the slaves of the Ricci and Albizzi, nor is there anything left " of our ancient liberty but the name and a false and feeble " shadow of the original. It is true O most excellent " seignors that we meet in this palace, appoint magistrates, " despatch embassies, levy soldiers, and put questions to the " voto like freemen, but the substance is first settled else- " where; and nothing arrives here without having passed " through the hands of one or the other party. Whoever " comes to these councils really to serve his country without " permission from the dominant faction, or suspected by the " Guelphic tribunal, is at once put aside; or under some other " of the numerous pretences in which they abound is kept at a " distance from the government. Up to this moment, if any " of us were dissatisfied with one faction we could join the " other, and in the exercise of this choice maintain a sort of " bastard liberty; but now, even this refuge no longer remains, " for it is well known that the Ricci are reconciled to the " Albizzi, or at least that some of their leading members have " coalesced in such a manner as to paralyse that faction; " wherefore it follows that we must all submit to one, or rather " to many; for the great evil of tyranny is that obedience

" must not only be paid to the chief tyrant but also to all his " minions. Some of you will tell me that I speak freely, " and you will tell me true; for as a waning light emits a " fitful splendour while it dies away, so should our expiring " liberty flare up with sudden brightness. And if I am told " that I speak at the peril of my head; I reply that I am not " so ignorant of the world as to be insensible to danger; but " either this business shall take another aspect and I bear " away the glorious fruit of my temerity; or if it continue still " unchecked, I fearlessly declare that I shall then have little " pleasure in preserving a life that dooms me to see my " beloved country become the bondslave of its own ambitious " citizens. I have been five times seated amongst you in this " palace, thrice as prior and twice as gonfalonier of justice: I " have seen the efforts of some good citizens to support our " falling liberty, and I have lent my humble but fearless aid " to sustain it; and now, if Heaven so decree, I will fall " cheerfully along with it; and this same spirit that at my " birth was free, as free shall it be restored to its Creator; " for whatever may become of me, no material ties or corpo- " real sufferings shall impede the unshackled working of my " mind."

Filippo Bastari was attentively heard and instantly supported by Simone Peruzzi, Lapo Castiglionchio and a host of others in rapid succession and without a moment's pause, so that the Albizzi thought it necessary to deny the charge of wishing either to enslave or sell their country; but it was well known, as they asserted, that Uguccione de' Ricci once thought of giving it to Bernabò. This attack was repelled by Georgio Ricci who declared that the speaker Francesco Albizzi had bragged to the lords of Ferrara and Padua that his father held Florence in as perfect obedience and servitude as they did the inhabitants of their own states, except an imagined appearance of liberty.

This recrimination strengthened the patriots and threw the whole council into confusion, so that the priors dissolved it with a resolution to discuss amongst themselves the actual condition of the republic: the result was that a committee of two nobles and eight popolani was appointed to discover the cause and most effectual remedy for existing grievances, but ending in a strong recommendation to curb the pride and break the power of Piero Albizzi and his party. In pursuance of this advice the gonfalonier and eight priors, the twelve buonomini, the sixteen gonfaloniers of companies, the nine captains of party, and the committee of investigation; in all fifty-six; were immediately formed into a Balià with full powers for settling the immediate business of their convocation, but otherwise circumstantially restricted. The spirit of this board was essentially good, and therefore, in conformity with the report, the Albizzi alone were at first singled out for castigation notwithstanding their adherents in the assembly: afterwards ninety-six followers of both factions were to be deprived of office, but as if fearful of their own work, they ended in condemning Piero Albizzi and Uguccione Ricci with two more of each family to five years' exclusion from every office except that of the Party Guelph, accompanied by a prohibition against their entering the official residence of any public rector, or approaching within a hundred "*braccia*" or about two hundred feet of the priors' palace, and having their names if drawn for office, returned to the electoral purses.

Besides these, which considering the Albizzi's power were deemed to be bold proceedings, a provision was made that enabled any citizen who might thereafter be injured by a more powerful neighbour, to lay a petition before the seignory and colleges, and on proving his charge the culprit became subject to the penalties of nobility; or as it was called, being inscribed in the list of the "*Grandi*" or great people, if he were only a simple citizen; but to the severer punishment of "*Sopra-*

grande" if he happened to be a nobleman. As the oppression of the weak by the strong, whether nobles or popolani appears to have been very prevalent especially in the rural districts, this law discontented many who, becoming impatient of the bit, joined the admonitionists and caused much ulterior evil. Several wise regulations were promulgated by this Balià, amongst others; that, except against the Ubaldini, (then actually at war with Florence and considered as a sort of outlaws) no war, truce, or peace, could thenceforth be made or broken; no troops sent out of the country, nor the submission of towns or other places be received without the previous approval of the seignory and colleges, the Capitani, the five councillors of commerce, a learned able and respected tribunal, two consuls from each Art* and ninety-six citizens chosen equally from the sixteen companies, of which number none could be drawn who had not previously served in some of the above offices, the judges of commerce excepted; and not more than two individuals from the same "*Consorteria*" or union of families. To these were subsequently added, and with potential voice the "*Dieci della Libertà;*" in all one hundred and ninety of the most experienced citizens; the whole forming a broad basis of popular representation apparently well calculated to prevent either peace or war being made at the caprice of powerful individuals or factions, merely to feed their own passions, or gratify a mischievous ambition. The citizens were moreover forbidden to enter the seignorial, or any of the rectors' palaces except on days of public audience, or to offer any donative to the latter functionaries; for much secret corruption was believed to exist in the courts of the podestà the executor of the ordinances of justice and the captain of the people. The execution of many of these laws was committed to the new tribunal above mentioned called

* In consequence of the mortality of 1348, the number of *Arts* or trades were reduced from twenty-one to fourteen, but were restored the following year.

the "*Ten of Liberty*" which was instituted by this Balià for the general superintendence of civil liberty a subject, according to our notions, but little understood in those half-civilised times; to prevent the formation of factions; to see justice well administered; and to discuss questions of peace and war with the other council, which deprived of their coöperation became lifeless: this important board was composed of two citizens of the inferior trades, four unoccupied popolani and two nobles; and was renewed every four months*.

These reforms humbled the Albizzi more in appearence than reality, and with ostensive impartiality bore harder on their rivals: by leaving open the Guelphic magistracy to both factions the Albizzi were in reality strengthened; for that tribunal's power was excessive and their influence in it paramount: therefore when Piero was told of the Balià's decree, he merely said "This will do well enough if they go no further." And even in the Balià itself their adherents were instrumental in modifying the first sweeping resolution by artfully, and perhaps truly representing the danger of offending so many powerful families; by showing the ample time which they still had to work and therefore the inutility and imprudence of haste; also the safer policy of first trying how a less extensive measure would be received by the community†. Nevertheless there were some strong spirits among their patriotic opponents: Megliore Guadagni was one who boldly opposed them, first by petitioning under the new law against Francesco degli Albizzi, with whom he had some dispute about a farm, and having him placed amongst the Grandi, and afterwards in the beginning of 1373; being then chief magistrate; he procured a law by which not only the three Albizzi but the whole of that race and the Ricci were excluded from office, and instead of their

A.D. 1373.

* Dom. Buoninsegni, Lib. iv., p. 556. — S. Ammirato, Lib. xiii., p. 682.—Marchionne di Coppo Stefani, Libro ix., Rub. 732, &c^a.

† M. di C. Stefani, Lib. ix., Rub. 732.

names being replaced in the election purses when drawn for official situations, which would have given them equal chances with others after the expiration of their punishment, the billets were in future to be torn up, and thus all hope destroyed until a new imbursement took place which would again be likely to extend the period of their exclusion*.

This was a bold resolute action against a family so numerous, rich and powerful with such a weapon as the Guelphic tribunal at their command, and who now with increased bitterness exerted themselves to re-double its pernicious influence. Guadagni's ground was however secure, the cause popular and already discussed, and his attack directed only against one obnoxious family with the fair expectation of powerful public protection if he failed; but it was a very different business when Piero Petriboni prior for Santo Spirito in the same seignory attacked the Capitani themselves. Certain citizens elated with this success against the Albizzi the great workers of admonition, attempted to arrest this formidable engine in its full career, and Petriboni introduced a bill to declare all admonitory acts invalid unless approved by the seignory and colleges. So bold a step was too much even for Migliore himself although it would have increased his present power and future safety, and was therefore not only rejected in the palace, but Piero was instantly accused of a wicked attempt to destroy the Party Guelph the basis and palladium of Florentine liberty; so subtle was the management and so deep the terror of that tribunal! Assuming this charge as true the Capitani followed up their blow, and as a natural consequence accused him with some plausibility of having proposed a law which struck directly at public freedom and therefore rendered him obnoxious to capital punishment; so that much discussion

* "*Il Diario del Monaldi*" extends this sentence to *ten* years. I have followed M. di Coppo Stefani, the historian and an actor in the political scene; but the "*Chronichetta*[illegible] *Incerto*," in Dominico M. Manni's collection, also says ten years.—Page 100.

followed on the expediency of beheading him. The moment Petriboni's term of office expired he answered the Capitani's summons as a known Ghibeline; and he who only one day before was seen exercising the highest functions of national government now appeared with a halter on his neck grovelling before his persecutors, imploring mercy for having introduced a law which he believed to be for his country's good, and offering to go into voluntary exile to save his head! He fortunately escaped with an admonition and kept his head, but lost all hope of using it in the government of his country*.

This outburst of the better-disposed citizens was perhaps more spirited than ably conducted: intent rather on destroying the effect of factions that immediately oppressed them than in providing for future security by a removal of causes, they fell between both and accomplished neither: the Albizzi remained powerful, and the Ricci, their only rivals, enfeebled: Petriboni attempted a deeper blow, and had he been properly seconded would have reëstablished the supreme government and destroyed the *imperium in imperio* of the Guelphic board. But the terror of this tribunal was so confirmed, and so confounded in the public mind with the very existence of liberty as to paralyse national energy and perplex all judgment. When the mind of a whole people is thus affected, the tyranny must be excessive, the power terrible, the obstacles to be surmounted formidable, and the full merit and boldness of their opposition can scarcely be appreciated by posterity. The fury of admonition, rendered fiercer by these proceedings, raged even within the tribunal itself and continued public disturbance; so that in the following year men were again found that unscared by Petriboni's destiny once more attempted to stem the tide of misrule and vindicate the rights of government.

A proposal for admonition was made by some member of the minor trades amongst the Capitani, and was opposed by the

* S. Ammirato, Lib. xiii., p. 667.

other, who himself narrowly escaped admonition in consequence: this caused additional discontent amongst the citizens as it showed them clearly and in despite of all their prejudices, that opposition to the will of the Capitani and not Ghibelinism, was the real cause of persecution. The prior Giovanni Magalotti fearlessly resolved to put an end to this tyrannical abuse of constitutional powers intended only for the preservation of liberty, and therefore assembling a council of six hundred Richiesti addressed them in a speech the purport of which was to prove that the admonitory system was fast bringing the republic to ruin. The sluice thus opened a torrent of eloquence followed in the same strain, member after member eagerly rising in support of Magalotti. On seeing this, Lapo of Casteglionchio, who from steady patriotism had turned completely round and was now one of the fiercest admonitionists, mounted the Ringhiera and with a bold and fluent tongue made a long rambling irrelevant speech until tired of his vituperation Magalotti ordered him to cease and descend from the platform. This command infuriated Lapo who in a deafening tone cried out "Look gentlemen to what "we are now reduced! A Guelph cannot speak in defence of "the Party Guelph! What worse could we expect from "Bernabò himself if he were lord of Florence? Giovanni "Magalotti and his followers are those who want to ruin the "bulwarks and citadel of liberty by silencing us their defenders! "Will the rest of you gentlemen suffer such arrogance and "tamely allow one man by the authority of his ill-suited office "to extinguish the most sacred tribunal of the Party Guelph, "the base and foundation of this republic?" Manetto Ricciardo one of the priors for Santo Spirito immediately asserted that so far from wishing to check Lapo he had full liberty to continue; but Magalotti unmoved by this, sternly repeated his command and confusion became general until the gonfalonier ordered Lapo to terminate his speech as briefly as possible.

When he concluded many others rose and denounced the admonitory system so effectually that a resolution was passed which recommended the Seignory to take immediate measures for curbing or absolutely abolishing this tyranny. Here was a fair promise, but some delay in the execution afforded time for fresh intrigue; and by new artifices the Capitani sheltered themselves from the coming storm until the plague which had again appeared, dispersed it altogether, so that the only result from this formidable gathering was the noting of Manetto Ricciardo in the books of the party as a friend and benefactor, and Giovanni Magalotti as a suspected Ghibeline*.

It usually happens that amidst the jostle of factions and consequent vicissitudes of power, the mass of lower and middle ranks acquire something in the scramble, and in Florence at almost every great revolution or reform some small advance was made by the minor trades towards a political equality with their superiors. So in this nominal abasement of the Albizzi the lower tradesmen demanded a voice in the court of commerce, and with some reason as it was in every way connected with their trades but still more closely as a court of bankruptcy. In consequence of this demand which was considered just, two consuls from the minor arts were added to the five already existing; yet it was a questionable, and proved an imprudent act as regarded the character of this court which had difficult and delicate duties to perform, involving questions of international law and requiring something beyond the views and information then existing amongst the inferior artisans of Florence. The reputation of this tribunal as a court of admiralty was far and widely spread, and with such confidence in its judgments that it was frequented, and its decisions voluntarily submitted to by France, Italy, and almost every other part of the commercial world: after this epoch however its reputation is said to have declined†.

* S. Ammirato, Lib. xiii., p. 690. Marc. di Coppo Stefani, Lib. ix., Rub. 734.
† S. Ammirato, Lib. xiii., p. 688.—

While these transactions were passing in Florence the remaining independent branches of the Ubaldini began to give some trouble; Guaspari Ubaldino had surprised the Florentine town of Castel Lione, and put the governor and garrison to death: this was a sharp and unexpected blow, and the more so because it was believed to have been struck by a stronger hand, for the Ubaldini were in the Pope's service who since the conquests of Albornoz had become a near and disagreeable neighbour pressing the Florentine territories almost on every side. Pope Gregory XI. was now undisputed lord of all the patrimony; of great part of La Marca and Romagna; and of the dukedom of Spoleto with Perugia and Bologna; and the cardinal of Burgos who governed the latter was fully as ambitious as his predecessor without his talents or sagacity. Moreover the Albizzi were known to be in close, and as it would seem by a letter taken from the abbot of Santa Trinità, in treasonable intercourse with this prelate*. In these circumstances the outrage was for some time unnoticed for fear of greater evil; but as robberies under the auspices of the Ubertini became frequent in the mountains a price was set on the head of eleven of that family, and a magistracy called the "*Eight of the Alps*" created to superintend their defence and security. In the year 1373 after some successful operations, Mainardo Ubaldini chief of the clan became a prisoner to Florence; he was first offered liberty in exchange for the town of Tirli, but failing in every negotiation with his family for this purpose was beheaded by the podestà, after both the captain of the people and the executor of the ordinances of justice had refused to carry out what they thought an unjust sentence, because he had been made prisoner within his own dominions. This fact while it honours those magistrates, proves the extreme weakness of government, and Mainardo's death was

* As we learn from Marchionne di Coppo Stefani, who was one of the Dieci della Libertà, before whom the affair came.—Libro ix., Rubrica 738.

universally blamed, for he was a man of talent and reputation and considered as the best of his restless race. After some further success several of the Pignole branch of the family voluntarily surrendered themselves and were favourably received as popolani of Florence: Lozzoli, Valdagnello, Tirli and all their other strongholds, fourteen in number, subsequently fell to the Florentines so that this numerous powerful and troublesome race was at length completely conquered and the republic relieved from a continual cause of anxiety and often of serious alarm *

COTEMPORARY MONARCHS. — England: Edward III. — Scotland: David Bruce, to 1371; then Robert II. (Stuart)—France: Charles V. (The Wise). —Castile and Leon: Peter the Cruel, 1368; then Henry II. of Trastamare. — Aragon: Peter IV. — Portugal: Peter I. to 1367; then Ferdinand.— Germany: Charles IV. Emperor, and King of Bohemia.—Naples: Joanna I. — Sicily: Frederic III. of Aragon.— Popes: Urban V. to 1370; then Gregory XI.—Poland: Casimir the Great to 1370; then Louis the Great, King of Hungary and Poland.—Greek Emperor: John Palæologus.—Ottoman Empire: Murad I. (Amurath).

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* Some idea may be formed of the power of this family by the following list of *Castelli*, or fenced towns, possessed by them about this period in the Apennines and Low Country, though they were then much reduced from their original splendour. Their names were as follows:—Monte Gemmoli, Frena, Caprile, Roccabruna, Tirli, Monte Colloreto, Lozzole, Vigiano, Castello Lione, Mantigno, Valdagnelli, Frassino, Susinana, Cerignolo, Belmonte, Pignole, Visano, Bibbiana, Piedimonté, Ciaregiuolo, Salicchio, and Castelpagano. — *Marchionne di Coppo Stefani*, Lib. ix., Rub. 739.— *S. Ammirato*, Lib. xi., p. 604, and Lib. xiii, pp. 686-8-9.—*Diario del Monaldi.*

CHAPTER XXVI.

FROM A.D. 1374 TO A.D. 1378.

BEFORE entering on the interesting portion of Florentine history which immediately follows the transactions already narrated, it may be as well to review the general condition of Italy up to this period and especially of Lombardy, as more closely connected with what will follow. A.D. 1374.

Foreign invasions, the inroads of condottieri, Sicilian wars, and domestic troubles, had successively kept the kingdom of Naples in a state of almost ceaseless agitation from the year 1350, when Louis king of Hungary had again occupied that country and reduced Giovanna to such difficulties as compelled the pontiff's interference to save her from destruction. In 1352 Clement VI. succeeded in restoring peace on condition that the Hungarian, Giovanna, and Louis of Tarento, should all three quit the realm until every circumstance of Andrea's murder had been fully investigated; so that if Giovanna should be implicated Naples would become a forfeit to Louis of Hungary: if not, she was still to reign, but pay him 300,000 florins for his expenses. A young beautiful and fascinating woman pleading her own cause before dissolute judges found more eloquence in tears than words and soon proved her innocence in the eyes, if not in the hearts of her auditors: she was acquitted by pope and cardinals, and King Louis, although far from convinced, acquiesced in the sentence but magnanimously or disdainfully refused the subsidy. Giovanna and her husband were crowned

in May 1352, and at Clement's request the long-imprisoned Neapolitan princes simultaneously received their freedom from Louis of Hungary*.—But there were other sources of trouble.

From the time that Sicily fell under the sway of Aragon no permanent peace had ever existed with Naples; wars, descents, rebellions, or revolts, had devastated both countries with various and alternate misery; yet Sicily remained independent. The Neapolitan Louis a prince of no reputation died in 1362, and Giovanna unable as a single woman to govern her turbulent vassals married James of Aragon who was immediately created Duke of Calabria; but after Acciajuoli's death in 1366 fortune and her Sicilian conquests alike fell from her even to Messina itself; so that in 1372 she ceded the whole island to King Frederic of Aragon as her feudatory for a yearly tribute of three thousand ounces of gold, equal at that time to about 15,000 florins, on condition of his relinquishing the royal title of Sicily for that of Trincaria; Giovanna herself exclusively bearing the former.

Venice after a severe struggle with Louis of Hungary which ended in 1358 by an ignominious peace, had again quarrelled with Padua notwithstanding all the endeavours of Florence the pope and Pisa to preserve tranquillity on land, while another of her numerous wars with Genoa, itself in a state of continual dissension, gave full occupation to all her maritime forces.

Bologna in 1355 was governed by Giovanni d'Oleggio for Matteo Visconte; but suspected and offended by him and unjustly treated by Galeazzo, with the aid of his Ghibeline adherents, the Maltraversi, he revolted and under the title of protector became absolute lord of that city: the confederates hailed this defection by instantly sending troops to his aid, and being an able determined man, Visconte's troops were repulsed and Oleggio's authority more firmly established. Meanwhile

* Costanzo, Ist. di Nap., vol. i°, Lib., vi., p. 366.

Matteo Visconte suddenly died; he was remarkable for his beauty talents and indolence, and fell a victim, it was believed, as much to the ambition of his two brothers as to their apprehension of mischief from his licentiousness which left the honour of no family unassailed however high their rank and respectability*. They now shared his dominions, still leaving Genoa as common property; and in this partition Bologna fell to the lot of Bernabò. In 1356 Giovanni d'Oleggio agreed by treaty to retain the lordship of that city during his lifetime only; but on Bernabò's part the whole transaction was deceptive, and under the false pretence of attacking Ferrara he despatched Arrigo, son of Castruccio Castracani, with a strong force to Bologna: Arrigo soon began to conspire against the state but was detected and with many others beheaded in defiance of every consequence by Oleggio, who after this naturally fell into the arms of the league, the only fruit that Bernabò's treachery produced. Galeazzo in like manner alienated John Palæologus Marquis of Monferrato, a prince of great power and ability, who in concert with the Beccaria of Pavia, and having himself considerable influence there as imperial vicar, openly defied the Visconti. With the help of Savoy he soon gained possession of Asti, Alba, Cherasco, Chieri, and almost all the Piedmontese cities, his enemy's indignation the while turning fiercely on Pavia which was closely blockaded in May, and a second army simultaneously dropped down the Po to besiege Borgoforte in the Mantuan country.

By the aid of Monferrato and the stirring eloquence of Petrarca's friend the Fra Jacopo Bussolari, a man of great energy and apparent self-devotion, one bold and successful sally was made, the Milanese works were destroyed and the city finally liberated on the twenty-seventh of May 1356 while the

* The probability seems to be that he died from the pure effects of debauchery, the excess of which, according to Corio, was disgusting. (Vide *Corio dell' Historie Milanese*, Parte iii[a], folio 229).

Visconti were thrice defeated in other places by the combined forces of Reggio, Mantua, and the Marquis of Ferrara. The confederates about this period purchased Count Lando's slippery aid with all his free companions, and their armies thus augmented carried fire and sword throughout the Milanese states. Lando then joined the Marquis of Monferrato; more losses accrued to Milan; Genoa revolted in November; and the deposed Doge Boccanegra then an exile at Pisa, or, according to Muratori, a sort of hostage at Milan, was reinstated in all his former authority notwithstanding the opposition of the nobles, who were not only excluded from power but some of them exiled, while he made common cause with the marquis and became a deadly foe of Milan *.

Things were thus in Lombardy when Cardinal Albornoz, after having with great political sagacity military skill and perseverance, reoccupied a large portion of the ecclesiastical states, turned his arms against Francesco degli Ordelaffi Lord of Forli, Forlimpopoli, and Cesina, as well as against Rinieri and Giovanni di Manfredi Seignors of Faenza, whom along with the Grand Company he anathematised, and followed it up by publishing that crusade which in 1357 was so successful at Florence †. Faenza and Ascoli surrendered, but Cesina was long and gallantly defended by Cea wife of Francesco Ordelaffi until compelled to yield by an insurrection of the far less devoted citizens.

The Lombard war continued in favour of the allies until June 1358 when peace was concluded; but to Bernabò Visconte a treaty was the mere couching of the tiger for a more deadly spring, and accordingly the following year he attempted to surprise Bologna. The siege of Pavia was also renewed without

* Corio, Hist. Mil., Parte iii^a^, folio 231, Ed. 1554.—M. Villani, Lib. vii., cap. xl. - Muratori, Anno 1356.—Cronache Milanesi di Giovani, P. Cagnola, &c., Lib. i°, p. 19, vol. iii.—Arch. Stor. Ital.

† Muratori places this event in 1356, after Villani, Ammirato in 1357.—M. Villani, Lib. vi., cap. xiv.—Muratori Annali, Anno 1356.

that city being able to receive any aid from Piedmont; for the Marquis of Monferrato after having engaged Lando and Baumgarten during their disgraceful retreat from Tuscany, was ultimately deserted by both; and Bussolari who had ousted the Beccaria, although to his own certain ruin, yet surrendered Pavia on favourable conditions to Galeazzo in 1359: Forli yielded the same year and Romagna became tranquil; but Oleggio, being too hardly pressed by Bernabò Visconte, abdicated in favour of the church receiving Fermo in exchange for Bologna, to the great joy of the inhabitants. The war and siege nevertheless continued until Visconte's army retired before an auxiliary force of wild Hungarians levied by Albornoz in 1360.

Galeazzo meanwhile was still in active hostility with Monferrato and the "White Company:" while Albornoz, Ferrara, Padua, and Reggio, unsuccessfully united in a demand for aid from Florence who still remained faithful to her treaty with Milan though fully alive to Visconte's increasing power and the risk of pontifical enmity *.

War soon recommenced in Lombardy and Bernabò, excommunicated by Urban V. and afterwards defeated by the confederates at Crevacuore, was finally compelled to cede Bologna to the church at a general peace concluded in 1364 between Milan and the other belligerent states. Two years afterwards an alliance, already mentioned, between the pope and emperor, nominally against all free companies but really against the Visconti, was commenced through the secret agency of Niccolo d'Este and Malatesta Unghero, and this awakening Bernabò's suspicion produced a demand on his part for admittance as a member on purpose to test their sincerity. Urban referred him to Charles who endeavoured to mislead the too subtile Visconte by hollow professions and false excuses: but Bernabò was not easily overreached, therefore instantly

* S. Ammirato, Lib. xii., p 601.

commanded his natural son Ambrogio to levy fresh troops in the Genoese territory where loose adventurers of all nations abounded, and with a plentiful supply of money the company of Saint George soon rose in compact order from the straggling freebooters of England France and Germany. Genoa was immediately menaced, and cowering under the uplifted arm of Visconte implored his alliance. This left Ambrogio at liberty to unite with Hawkwood after his defeat by Baumgarten and subsequent expulsion from Siena; but a later attack on the Neapolitan dominions by this young chieftain was less fortunate; for after having inflicted much misery there, he was totally defeated and made prisoner by Giovanni Malatacca with the combined forces of Rome and Naples; three hundred of his followers were instantly hanged by the pope and the whole company annihilated *.

Galeazzo Visconte who like Bernabò was ever seeking for high family alliances, after marrying his son to Isabella of France, in 1368 united his daughter Violante with Lionel Duke of Clarence son of Edward III. of England, and giving with her besides a dowry of 200,000 florins, the city of Alba and other fortified towns in Piedmont. These nuptials were celebrated with extraordinary magnificence in the beginning of June, but Clarence, exhausted as was believed by intemperance, died within the year and much vexation accrued to Galeazzo in consequence who lost not only Alba but all the other towns, along with that attachment of the English companies to secure whose fidelity was, according to some authors, one of his great inducements to this match †.

After the peace with Charles and his allies in 1369; and the renewed hostilities consequent on the revolt of San Miniato when Florence became his enemy, Galeazzo recommenced the war with Montferrato who had purchased Alba and the other

* Muratori, Annali, Anni 1366-1367.
† Muratori, Annali, 1368, 1369.—Corio, Parte iii^a, folio 238.

Piedmontese towns from the English, while Bernabò acquired Sarazana and Reggio; the former by voluntary cession, the latter by purchase from a condottiere, brother to Count Lando, who had been employed by Niccolo d' Este to take treacherous possession of it for him. Having sacked the town with unusual cruelty even for these freebooters, this chief betrayed his deceitful employer and sold it in 1371 to the most bitter enemy of d' Este. Such was the faith of mercenaries, the morality of princes, and the lamentable destiny of unoffending citizens in that turbulent and remorseless age!

Ambrogio Visconte, who was now ransomed and commanding the Milanese army, invaded both Ferrara and Modena to the great alarm of Gregory and his allies; more especially as they were now deprived of the Marquis of Monferrato's abilities, for this distinguished chieftain died in 1372 leaving his children minors under the protection of that pontiff and Duke Otho of Brunswick. These princes uniting with Amadeo Count of Savoy, who became alarmed at Frederic Marquis of Saluzzo's movements in favour of Visconte, continued the war against Galeazzo and his new ally, while the other papal forces with Nicholas of Este, Francis Carrara of Padua and a body of Florentine auxiliaries made war on Bernabò; nor did Florence violate the treaty of 1370 by this assistance, as a friendly force could in those days be honourably despatched to the succour of an ally if so bound by previous treaty, without any national quarrel or new cause of offence. This army was defeated by Ambrogio on the second of June, after a bloody battle in which Rod a German commander of the Florentines and a thousand men were made prisoners, amongst others William of Fogliano the general-in-chief who was barbarously put to death by Bernabò. The capture of Correggio followed as an immediate consequence of this victory, and Bernabò improving his advantage attempted the siege of Modena but was foiled by the confederates now reënforced by the legate of Bologna and a

Neapolitan contingent: yet Milan was more weakened and her enemy more strengthened by the departure of Hawkwood, who disgusted at not being allowed to bring the Count of Savoy to battle joined the papal army as soon as his term of service had expired and changed the fortune of the war.

In the security of a short truce concluded by the mediation of France, Ambrogio, apparently unauthorised by his father; devastated all the Bolognese territory up to the city gates and carried off plunder amounting to 600,000 florins: as this threatened a renewal of hostilities, Pope Gregory XI. imposed a tithe on England, Hungary, Poland, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, and with the submissive zeal of these pious kingdoms maintained two powerful armies; one in Piedmont against Galeazzo; the other to oppose his brother in Lombardy; and excommunicated both in 1373. The only effect of this anathema was a fresh and immediate spoliation of church property throughout all the Milanese territory; and at the natural expiration of the truce, that of Bologna was again ravaged by Ambrogio Visconte. But the latter was now opposed by a more skilful enemy who attacked his retreating army encumbered as it was with prey and plunder, and defeated him at the river Panaro with severe loss. Hawkwood by this victory opened all the territory of Pavia and Piacenza, and many Guelphic towns seized the occasion for revolt, while Amadeo of Savoy advanced on the other side carrying devastation almost to the gates of Pavia, and even ravaging for several months the whole Milanese territory, besides cutting off most of the communications with that capital.

To prevent the junction of his enemies Visconte boldly threw himself between them and routed a large body of troops at Monte Chiaro, but the Lord of Cussì and Hawkwood coming speedily up, although much inferior in numbers, gave him a signal defeat on the eighth of May 1373 at Gavardo near the bridge of the river Chiesi, capturing many nobles of the highest

rank and distinction. Revolts followed with great rapidity in the Bergamese territory; Ambrogio was killed on the seventeenth of August in attempting to quell them, and Bernabò grieved and furious at his son's death marched in person to the scene of action and wreaked a cruel vengeance on the rebellious province. About the same time Galeazzo recovered many of his losses in the Piacentino and affairs being thus rendered more equal peace began to be talked of, but the French legates, who absolutely disposed of the papal revenues as they pleased, found war more advantageous for their own interest and Lombardy was for a while longer held to this fiery ordeal without remorse or mitigation*. Thus from Venice to Genoa human passions, borne onward by unbridled power, spread desolation like a pall over the land; hatred, treachery, and ambition were struggling for mastery on every side, and priest and potentate trampled down humanity like the mossy covering of the earth, as fit only to bear the print of their remorseless footsteps.

We have already seen how the great lords of Italy had profited by the pope's residence at Avignon to usurp almost all the ecclesiastical dominions: in Romagna, La Marca, Spoleto and the Patrimony, everything had been occupied: Giovanni di Vico, the Malatesti of Rimini, Polenta of Ravenna, Gentile Mogliano of Fermo, Francesco Ordelaffi of Forlì, besides a swarm of lesser tyrants, had usurped the sovereignty of numerous cities which it was necessary that the church should either recover, or else abandon together with all her temporal power in Italy. It has been shown how Cardinal Egidio Albornoz of Toledo who had acquired much military experience in the Moorish wars, succeeded in accomplishing the former task, to which indeed he was peculiarly adapted, as a soldier a scholar and a statesman. With a rapid perception of the weak points in human character he used them as the means of leading men at his will; prompt in conception,

* Muratori, Annali, Anno 1373.

prompter in execution, he yet possessed a keen-sighted and far-reaching patience which always enabled him to strike at the proper moment, and his blows were sure, sudden, and unexpected. Moderate after victory, unsubdued by defeat, he seemed to wax stronger from misfortune, and without more scruples than others of his time, he was at once firm and gentle, severe or affable, as occasion required; and whether sagaciously threading his way through the intricacies of human government, or boldly meeting all the violence of war, he generally accomplished his purpose: such at least was his character amongst cotemporaries; and thus working, in about four years he was enabled to complete his bold and arduous enterprise. The foreign character and predilections of the papal court had a baneful influence on Italy, governed as it was entirely by French legates whose rule was haughty, insolent, and almost intolerable. Not only the ecclesiastical cities but those also which called themselves free did they according to Aretino, endeavour to subjugate: all their governments and establishments were those of war not peace, and Italy was filled with fierce transalpine adventurers who came in herds to batten on her fruitfulness.

The citadels which in many free cities were built by these rulers at enormous cost, proved that the people felt no sensation of liberty but rather endured a forced and miserable servitude, while the legates, execrated by their subjects, were universally feared and suspected by their neighbours. Such was the state of Italy in 1374, and Bernabò becoming every day more doubtful and uneasy determined notwithstanding the legate's opposition to negotiate a truce at Avignon, which by dint of money was accomplished, but only for one year, in 1374. He was more anxious for this pause foreseeing that the condottieri once discharged from the papal service would resume their usual course by overrunning and perhaps devastating Tuscany:

I probably suspecting the legate's secret designs, expected

that instead of an ancient friend a new and bitter enemy would arise against the church in the leading state of that country*.

Florence at this period had greatly suffered and the public mind became painfully depressed by successive inflictions of flood pestilence and famine: plague disappeared in autumn, but rains and devastating floods soon followed, and a searching scarcity of food thinned out the afflicted citizens. The late truce was also pregnant with evils the offspring of priestly ambition; and a fearful extension of ecclesiastical power ultimately forced on a war that however just in its objects, skilful and vigorous in execution, and glorious in its termination; was nevertheless accompanied by even more than the usual atrocities; atrocities not committed by Florence, but by the so-called Christian pastors of a Christian church, and their cruel and remorseless myrmidons†.

The new year brought with it a more sickening scarcity, while the Bolognese territory and Romagna abounded; earnest entreaties were made to the legate for a supply of corn, and with confident expectations of success; he was the ally of Florence, her troops were still in his service, and she had always been the unflinching adherent of popes and priestcraft: no doubt was therefore entertained of receiving the customary provisions from those provinces; but the alarm and anger that distracted that community may be conceived when his stern refusal was publicly announced to the citizens. William de Noellet cardinal of Saint Angelo, who had succeeded the cardinal of Burgos at Bologna had anything in view but the relief of Florence; disgusted at her refusal to lend him money for the payment of his troops he turned them loose upon her territory and aimed through the papal influence at supreme power in Tuscany: misjudging the Florentine

A.D. 1375.

* Leon. Aretino, Lib. viii.—Domen. Boninsegni, Historie Fiorentine, Lib. iv., p. 559.

† Poggio Bracciolini, Lib. i.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xiii., p. 689.

character he imagined that tired of internal quarrels, reduced by sickness, and subdued by famine; the people would turn against their rulers and gladly receive the man who would bring peace and abundance to their sufferings. Their habitual reverence for the church and the secret favour of the Albizzi strengthened this belief; and so convinced was he of its truth that he sent an engineer covertly to examine and report on the most favourable position for constructing a citadel at Florence*.

Whether acting under secret instructions from Avignon or independently of that court, Noellet continued his cruel prohibition in the face of a papal order to the contrary, and compelled Florence to supply herself elsewhere at a ruinous expense, in order to hold out until the forthcoming harvest. Even this hope began to wither when she beheld Hawkwood and all his freebooters let loose upon her plains as Bernabò had anticipated; ostensibly as an unretained and independent chieftain, but really a paid condottiere acting by command of the cardinal, who not only ordered the harvest to be destroyed but also organised a conspiracy at Prato by means of a priest and a friar, for the delivery of that important city into his possession. Hawkwood who disliked the French was inclined from mere calculation of individual interest to the side of Florence with whom he soon came to an understanding and gave secret information of everything: the conspirators were taken and hanged while Hawkwood was bought off for five years at the price of 130,000 florins, and so this summer's harvest escaped along with the republic itself from almost certain destruction†.

Previous to this transaction an embassy had been sent to

* M. di Coppo Stefani, Lib. ix., Rubric 751. — Poggio Bracciolini, Istoria Fiorentina, Lib. i., p. 31.— "Cronichetto d' Incerto," Vide Manni's collection, Florence, 1733, p. 202.
† Cronichetto d' Incerto, p. 203.— Boninsegni, Lib. iv., p. 559.—M. di Coppo Stefani, Lib. ix., Rub. 751.— Poggio Bracciolini, Lib. ii., p. 34.— Leon. Aretino, Lib. viii., folio 157.— S. Ammirato, Lib. xiii., p. 692.— Macchiavelli, Lib. iii.

remonstrate with the legate on his breach of faith, and demand the recal of Hawkwood; but Noellet loudly disowned the act; asserted that he was no longer employed by the church; advised the Florentines to oppose him stoutly; and at the ambassador's request furnished them with a letter to that general containing a formal discharge from the papal service. The artful plenipotentiaries lost no time in forwarding this document by a secret messenger to Hawkwood and their own government, while the legate more leisurely despatched a counter order to the Englishman urging an implicit obedience to his previous instructions. Hawkwood however preferred 130,000 florins, and an annual salary of 1200 more while he remained in Italy, to the odium of undertaking such an enterprise for the benefit of others; wherefore availing himself of this false discharge he became the friend instead of the enemy of Florence *. So monstrous a web of treachery, combined with the hostile movements of Gerard Dupuis abbot of Montmayeur, on the Perugian frontier whence he threatened Siena, filled the citizens with deeper alarm and more intense indignation: they now saw the futility of religious scruples, were convinced that no time should be lost, and at the exhortation of Niccolò di Guigni Gonfalonier of Justice, all private and political animosities were repressed; even the Albizzi, now as powerful as ever and devoted to the church, were compelled to join in the general ardour, and an universal burst of anger was heard from the towers of Florence. Nevertheless so profoundly reverenced was the church that even the sound of war against a pope appeared to many little less than blasphemy: numbers opposed it on this pretence but really from party motives alone; and although Uguccione Ricci was dead, the present discussion and a proposed alliance with Bernabò Visconte whom he had ever supported, roused all that faction into full activity. The Albizzi could not stem this torrent; a general council assembled and declared the cause of

* M. di Coppo Stefani, Lib. ix., Rub. 751.

liberty paramount to every other consideration; the war was affirmed to be rather against the injustice and tyranny of foreign governors than the church itself; an immediate alliance with Bernabò was voted without opposition, and all the ecclesiastical cities then groaning under French oppression were to be invited to revolt and boldly achieve their independence *. These spirited resolutions were instantly executed, and on the eight of August 1375 Alessandro de' Bardi, Giovanni Dini, Giovanni Magalotti, Andrea Salviati, Tommaso Strozzi, Guiccio Guicci, Matteo Soldi, and Giovanni de' Moni; names justly celebrated; were formed into a supreme council of war called "*Gli Otto della Guerra;*" and afterwards, from their able conduct, "GLI OTTO SANTI DELLA GUERRA"†; armed with the concentrated power of the whole Florentine nation in what regarded war. These happened to be all inimical to the Albizzi and Admonition, and yet by their combined influence the latter faction under Piero Albizzi, Carlo Strozzi, and Lapo Castiglionchio was driven to a closer union in self-defence, and therefore to a more determined and severe exercise of that obnoxious power, accompanied by great public injury and the consolidation of its own pernicious authority ‡.

All this did not damp the energy of government, who conceiving the war exclusively ecclesiastical, created a new board of finance on purpose to tax church property for its support: 90,000 florins were thus raised and instantly applied to discharge so much of Hawkwood's subsidy; nor did their labours end here; both priests and monks were still squeezed even to the sale of their possessions and moveables with a sort of poetical justice that at once pleased and alarmed the people. Nor was their apprehension unfounded, for a flash of papal indignation almost instantly descended on the gonfalonier priors

* Poggio Bracciolini, Lib. ii., p. 36.
† "*The Eight Saints of the War.*"
‡ Scip. Ammirato, Lib. xiii., pp. 693. 694.—Macchiavelli, Lib. iii.— Mar, di Coppo Stefani, Istor. Fior., Lib. ix. Rub. 752, 755.

and council of war; the whole government was thus struck along with many other citizens who held no official employment; and while the nation still trembled from this shock another volley withered its branches throughout all Europe. Monarchs were forbidden to harbour them; their goods were outlawed; from Germany, England, France, Hungary, and Naples they were banished, despoiled, and treated more or less severely according to the degree of papal influence and the existing policy of governments; but the public and private loss was fearful: yet in the midst of this persecution both Venice and Pisa received them, traded as usual, and nobly disregarded every ecclesiastical censure *.

Nothing daunted, the government forbid any citizen either to ask for or accept the bishoprics of Florence or Fiesole, on the pretext that their friends and relations were apt to assume too much pride and often oppressed the people: severe penalties attended this law which even the seignory was bound both in letter and in spirit to respect; for the mere assertion of its being "contrary to church privileges" was made punishable by the penalty of 1000 florins. This was closely followed by an edict which deprived ecclesiastics of the right to carry arms or maintain armed followers and also of the power of licensing others to do so, which was thenceforth reserved to the government alone; and thus new fire was heaped on this fiercely blazing flame. On the twenty-seventh of July 1375 a short time before the creation of the "Otto della Guerra," the league with Bernabò, although perseveringly thwarted by Albizzi and the church party and even delayed by Galeazzo Visconte in his anxiety to avoid a new rupture with Avignon, was concluded for five years †.

To Bernabò the depression of the church or Florence was

* S. Ammirato, Lib. xiii., p. 696.—M. di Coppo Stefani, Lib. ix., Rub. 754.

† S. Ammirato, Lib. xiii., p. 693.—Cronichetto d' Incerto, p. 204. Dom. Manni's collection.

equally acceptable; they were obstacles to his ambition, and their disunion his best policy; he therefore rejoiced at so fair an opportunity of weakening both by supporting either; and although he engaged to maintain eleven hundred and fifty lances besides heavy-armed infantry, archers, and crossbowmen, more real service was hoped from his reputation than assistance for the Milanese forces were bound not to enter the pope's territory which would have infringed the truce; but the potent name of Visconte was likely to produce greater consequences in the forthcoming negotiations with disaffected cities. The general detestation of French tyranny was too notorious, and the lever it offered much too powerful to be neglected by statesmen so able and spirited as the "Otto della Guerra," who were moreover determined to let no superstitious scruples impede their public labours. They had money at command, and acting independent of all control began quietly to sap the tottering foundations of papal authority throughout the ecclesiastical states while at home there appeared no outward symptom of aggression: they made no warlike preparations except for defence; appointed no celebrated captain, not even an Italian; and contented themselves with promoting Conrad of Suabia, an officer already in their service, to command the troops; but at the same time Montefeltrino was purchased from the Belforti, and Pozzo in the Mugello from the Bardi family as positions necessary to national protection *.

Notwithstanding this apparent calm treaties were also formed or on foot with Siena, Lucca, Cortona, and Arezzo, all suffering from or fearful of the church; Pisa joined in the following January and the army was notably increased, organised, and made ready for action. On the ninth of December Conrad received two standards: one the usual Florentine Lily, the other red, with the word LIBERTAS written diagonally across

* Chronichetto d' Incerto, p. 204. Col^{n}. Dom^{o}. Manni.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xiii., p. 694.

it in silver letters; and at the head of nine hundred lances and crossbows marched to assist Perugia. Florence now declared herself ready to support unconditionally any ecclesiastical city that desired its freedom; but thus undermined, the whole temporal edifice of papal authority began to crumble, according to the emphatic expression of a Florentine, like a dry wall from which the supporting stones had been abstracted *. In an instant Città di Castello, Viterbo, Montefiascone, Perugia, Foligno, Spoleto, Todi, Ascoli, Orvieto, Toscanella, Orti, Narni, Carnerino, Urbino, Radicofani and Sarteano successively fell off; and after a short time no less than eighty cities and walled towns cast off the high-priest's burden and achieved their freedom. Several would have given themselves to Florence, but her only answer was LIBERTAS; military aid, and a recommendation to lose no time in securing their independence †.

The order of these rebellions varies in different authors; the citadel of Ascoli, under Gomez Albornoz nephew of the cardinal held out long; several cities reëstablished their former seignors; Forlì for instance recalled Sinibaldo degli Ordilaffi son of the heroic Marzia; and Galeotto Malatesta of Rimini alone remained faithful to the church which with the exception of that fief and its dependencies lost in one year no less than sixty-four cities and fifteen hundred and seventy-seven castelli or fortified towns by this well-conducted enterprise. And because Florence would put forth all her strength without incumbrance a Milanese army occupied and guarded her territory while Hawkwood, yet in the papal service, was hurried from place to place as revolts broke forth, and still as he moved the town just quitted rose in arms and achieved its liberty, while that he marched on was already free ‡.

* M. di Coppo Stefani, Lib. ix., Rub. 753.—Cronichetto d' Incerto.— Boninsegnie, Lib. iv., p. 565.—Sismondi, vol. v., cap. xlix.

† M. di Coppo Stefani, Lib. ix., R. 753.

‡ Sismondi, vol v., cap. xlix.—Cronichetto d' Incerto, p. 205.— Leon. Aretino, Lib. viii.—Dom. Boninsegni, Lib. iv., p. 564.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xiii., p. 695.

The thunder of this avalanche vibrated through the Alpine solitudes and to the halls of Avignon with such a din as to startle the lascivious slumbers of its priestly inmates: Pope Gregory was aroused in fear and anger; and alarmed for Bologna suddenly enlisted the last of those free companies that remained in France, under John of Malestroit and Silvester of Buda. This band exceeded all others in boasting and ferocity though not in valour; it was ten thousand strong, and when its commanders were asked if they thought they could enter Florence, "*Yes, if the sun can enter there*" was their vain audacious answer; yet they not only did not penetrate into that city but never even set foot on the Florentine territory.

The pope at the commencement of 1376, feeling perhaps some touch of conscience at the prospect of letting such a band of miscreants loose on Italy, sent Niccolà Spinello, seneschal of Provence, and Bartolommeo Giacoppi, a Genoese doctor of laws, to treat of peace with offers to set Perugia and Città di Castello at liberty if the Florentines would only leave Bologna unmolested and discontinue the war. Many councils of Richiesti were held on these proposals and much inclination for peace prevailed in Florence; but under cover of all these the EIGHT SAINTS, still stern and determined, completed their negotiation with Bologna and that city at length asserted its independence. Nevertheless it would probably have remained faithful if the legate, unable to pay Hawkwood to whom he was deeply indebted, had not given the two small towns of Castro Caro and Bagno Cavallo in pledge for payment; these were of course most cruelly plundered, and a report becoming rife, at the moment when Hawkwood was investing the rebellious town of Grananiolo, that Bologna was sold to the Marquis of Este, determined the citizens to revolt.

A.D. 1376.

The Florentine troops, who always kept the field, instantly marched in considerable force with the standard of liberty to their aid: when this news reached Florence, where

negotiations for peace were in progress founded principally on a belief in that city's fidelity, the papal ambassadors took fright and departed in high anger to Avignon. The Florentines were blamed, even by many of their own citizens, not only for urging the pope's subjects to rebellion during such negotiations, but also for losing so fair an occasion of honourably terminating the war; and perhaps for their own exclusive benefit peace would have been preferable because the church formed a strong bulwark against Milanese ambition; but their views were far higher, their aspirations more generous, it was the cause of all Italy, not Florence alone; they had excited city after city to revolt; exposed an enormous mass of Italian people to foreign vengeance and papal indignation and were drawing down on that country new hordes of cruel and relentless freebooters: they were the chiefs and leaders of this wide-spread insurrection and had advanced too far to retreat either with honour to themselves or safety to their confederates. Moreover though Bologna did not revolt until the nineteenth of March, spiritual proceedings had been long in progress against the Florentines and they were even cited to appear before the consistory at Avignon as early as the third of February. This and the descent of the Bretons were meant to intimidate, but only exasperated; and consequently sealed the fate of Bologna.

Hostilities therefore continued; but there were nevertheless loud cries against this resolution not only by the church party but many honest citizens who saw more real good in honourable peace than successful war, independent of all religious scruples. To depress the church appeared impolitic in the eyes of some; the independence of Bologna an object of great magnitude to others; religious scruples had their full weight with the devout; and private views and individual interests influenced many, as may well be believed in a commercial state ruled exclusively by commercial men: but the triumphs and dictatorial power of the EIGHT, backed by almost universal

indignation, and the belief that whatever course were taken the city was still doomed to suffer under papal censures, carried the war party over every obstacle and bore them right onward in their course of victory. Nor was their ardour lessened at hearing of the sack of Faenza which the count of Romagna on the news of Bologna's rebellion had delivered in charge to Hawkwood and eight hundred English lances. This chief expelled as it were from Bologna and shut out from Grananuolo with long arrears of pay due by the church whose affairs were in ruin, determined to shift for himself: he therefore without scruple gave up Faenza to his troops who driving out the elder women and children put many citizens to death, retained the young women and even the nuns amongst themselves and then sold this desolate city to the marquis of Ferrara, from whom it was taken a short time after by means of the Florentines, and restored to the Manfredi its ancient lords*.

Notwithstanding their profound and even superstitious reverence for the church, the Florentines were not so much scared by its spiritual censures, as alarmed for the financial injury likely to follow from a disturbance of their commercial relations. Depending entirely on trade and manufactures, their merchants were thickly planted in every region of the world; and as the high-priest's mysterious influence was more awful in proportion to his distance and obscurity, they felt that papal anathemas, still formidable, though weakened by abuse, would be as absolutely obeyed by remoter nations as even in Avignon itself, where they were sure to be executed with the utmost rigour, and where no less than five hundred Florentine merchants already trembled for their property. Such considerations made it imperative on Florence to defend her cause with all the legal boldness and talents of the commonwealth: the Pope's attorney-general had accused her in public consistory of failure in her

* M. di Coppo Stefani, Lib. ix., Rub. 758.—Cronichetto d' Incerto, p. 207.—Poggio Bracciolini, Lib. ii., p. xli.

duty, and injuries inflicted on the holy see, and demanded a sentence against the republic after an impartial hearing by judges expressly appointed: the whole Florentine magistracy was then cited to appear, as well as every unofficial citizen who was suspected of having in any way favoured an appeal to arms against the church.

To answer this summons Messer Donato Barbadori a Doctor of Laws and exceedingly eloquent, Alessandro dell' Antella, and Domenico di Silvestro, both eminent lawyers, were after much consultation despatched to Avignon. Barbadori in an eloquent discourse which drew tears from the Italian cardinals, who were all in favour of Florence, insisted that the tyrannical government of the French legates was the true and only occasion of the war. He dwelt on the long and continued attachment of Florence to the Holy See, recapitulated in historical order the various wars, persecutions and insults she had sustained in its defence, from the time of Barbarossa downwards; he asserted that misgovernment was always the primary cause of rebellion and therefore the crime of resistance, if crime it were, should be laid to the governors not the governed, and still less to the Florentines who took up arms to preserve their lives and liberty. He then exposed the Bolognese legate's wickedness in first making hypocritical professions of friendship, then cruelly refusing food to a starving people, and afterwards treacherously loosing a band of rapacious soldiers on their plains to plunder and destroy the very harvest to which a famishing nation were eagerly looking for their sustenance; and this on purpose to bow their spirit and facilitate their subjugation. If these things were done by the Pope's command, then had Florence just reason to complain of injury and ingratitude from the pontiff; but if without, then it was the legates that merited his supreme displeasure, not the Florentine people, who only repelled their insufferable tyranny.

"Cast thine eyes O holy father," he passionately ex-

claimed, "Cast thine eyes on those miserable cities that under "the rule of these governors have been treated as the vilest "slaves; let the dreadful fate of Faenza move thy pity, a prey "as it has become to thine own legate's relentless myrmidons! "O unhappy city! O wicked deed! Who will not weep when "I tell him of citizens, matrons, and innocent virgins; nay "even the holy sisterhood themselves, being dragged from their "paternal roofs and sacred dwellings, and forced to submit to "the brutal passions of a licentious soldiery! When I tell of "multitudes of aged women and young children driven naked "from their homes and sent to beg their bread about the "world! These are the works of thy legates; this is their "sanctity, their piety, their justice! And these wrongs, "if thou dost not remedy but instead thereof persecutest "those who have boldly resisted them; remember that God "will one day judge thee, and then, what will be his considera-"tion of such acts in the awful condemnation of the world? "Was it not thy office as pastor of all the Christian flock on "seeing us oppressed in a way that even to infidels would "have been shameful; was it not I say, thy duty to rebuke "thy infamous ministers rather than drive us to the neces-"sity of arming in our own defence? Was it not thy duty to "curb thy rapacious and ambitious legate? Thou shouldst "have quenched the fire that began to burn; thou shouldst "have defended the liberty of thy children; thou shouldst "have remembered the benefits conferred by our nation on the "Roman priesthood, and have gratefully defended their cause "against the world. Either we; only for having dared to "defend our country our wives our children and our liberty; "are to be branded as the authors of this war; or else thy legate "the spring and source of every evil; the industrious and "malignant disturber of our national tranquillity! Certes holy "father if thou wishest to judge uprightly and to suppress "every wayward passion as becomes the vicar of Christ thou

" wilt not detect in our conduct a cause for this war, nor find " that we have failed in any point of duty; we have only " yielded to necessity; we have never committed a single act " against thy dignity or authority, or against the church of " Rome; but we have endeavoured to bridle those whose " frantic and impetuous ambition so foully attempted to deprive " us of life and liberty. For these reasons, most holy father, " vouchsafe to shield us thy children from a stranger's violence; " recal thy wonted commiseration, and the mercy, and the " charity that so well become a pontiff; and let the arms that " we have so often wielded against tyrants, kings, and emperors, " to defend the church of God and the states of thy predeces- " sors, now plead with thee to take us under thy holy protec- " tion. Remember that necessity alone has constrained us to " a course where we seek for nothing but safety, the defence of " our country, and the preservation of our liberty. If notwith- " standing this thou deemest fit to condemn and brand us with " some heavy ecclesiastical censure, as our enemies wish and " publicly declare to be thy resolve, we will endeavour to bear " it meekly by imploring the assistance of Him who never " abandoned those that put their trust in him; the unerring " advocate and defender of the innocent."

Murmurs both of applause and dissatisfaction ran confusedly through the court and its numerous auditors, amongst whom the general feeling was in favour of Florence but the sentence was deferred until a future day; yet not to leave the ambassadors unanswered the pontiff replied in substance as follows.

" We have listened, O Florentines, to everything, both rele- " vant and irrelevant, that you have with the greatest industry " been able to collect in your defence, and we, as you have " advised us will endeavour to bear ourselves justly, and " neither allow ourselves to be moved by anger nor blinded " by prejudice in the formation of our judgment; neither " will we listen to calumny, but give ear only to the sacred

" truth. But on the other hand we advise you also to drop all " this commiserating and piteous language as well as every " other artifice and seductive form of speech, which are merely " fitted to mislead and deceive the judge, and frankly join us " in seeking for the simple truth. I now ask you, seeing that " Florence aided, or rather was the cause of liberating the " ecclesiastical cities, (for you know this to be truth, and what " is generally notorious can scarcely be denied:) what reason " can you give for having done so? Certes the reason you " allege, the assumption of arms in self-defence at first seems " good and rational because all have a right to defend them- " selves from injury. But if a man use his arms, not to stave " off external violence, but to murder him whom he only sus- " pects and fears, this is homicide and worthy of present con- " demnation. You Florentines marched your armies to Città " di Castello, to Perugia, to Bologna, to besiege the citadels of " the church and expel her governors; this, be it said with all " deference, is not defending yourselves against aggression but " doing violence to others; not driving danger from your own " doors but carrying it to your neighbours' dwellings. But " why speak of fear and suspicion when it is well known you " were not moved by these reasons, but by mere hatred: " nevertheless let us for the present leave Bologna Perugia " and Città di Castello, which you have excited to revolt and " laid siege to their citadels; let us conclude that their near " neighbourhood *did* give you some reasonable cause of suspi- " cion and of fear; but what shall we say of Ascoli in La " Marca, and the other towns and cities of that province so " distant from you? Surely neither fear nor suspicion but a " determined hatred of the church could move you to make *them* " revolt! It was not only to diminish the ecclesiastical autho- " rity in Italy but to destroy it altogether that you thus acted, " and yet you call yourselves children of the Roman church! " Not perceiving that your conduct is that of a son laying

" violent hands on his own parent rather than on a stranger!
" You try to cast odium upon the legates; you accuse them of
" having erected fortresses in every city like very tyrants, and
" you lay the whole crime of rebellion to their charge. Of the
" citadels we ourselves do not approve if the citizens can be
" reasonably governed without them; but as high-fed horses
" become restive for lack of exercise, so do our subjects wax
" proud and insubordinate by times if the reins of government
" be held too lightly, and often require more powerful bridling.
" We are right willing to confess that every legitimate govern-
" ment is designed for the people's benefit in order that they
" may live securely and peaceably, and that those troublesome
" audacious citizens who swarm in every state shall not dare
" to disturb society against the will of better men.

" But as to the offence with which you charge these minis-
" ters, it is plain that not a single city revolted until urged on
" by your promises and persuasions; so that to you only must
" be imputed the crime, and not to our lieutenants. Finally,
" you lament with infinite feeling the unhappy fate of Faenza,
" as if this calamity were not directly occasioned by Bolognese
" rebellion; for the English never would have occupied that
" city had Bologna only remained faithful; and hence it fol-
" lows that whoever occasioned the revolt of Bologna caused
" also the miserable extermination of Faenza's citizens; and
" consequently for this, in common with every other injury, we
" may justly complain of you. We desired thus briefly to
" answer your oration without affirming anything, but only
" arguing the point in order that when final sentence is given,
" it may also be given justly" *.

Several days elapsed in going through the forms of investigation, during which the Florentine deputies preserved their bold and manly dignity both in word and action until the day

* Leon. Aretino, Lib. viii.—Poggio Bracciolini Storia Flor., Lib. ii., p. 42.

of final judgment when all further mockery ended by a withering sentence of excommunication.

Their souls were solemnly condemned to the pains of hell; fire and water were interdicted; their persons and property outlawed in every Christian land, and they were finally declared lawful prey for all who chose to sell plunder or kill them as though they were mere slaves or infidels. On hearing this, Barbadori, a bold advocate and ardent patriot, threw himself in great emotion on his knees before a crucifix that adorned the hall, and bare-headed in a grave and solemn voice so loud and clear as to be heard by pope and cardinals, made this awful demand for justice.

"To thee, O Lord Jesus Christ! from this unholy sentence "pronounced by thy vicar permit me to appeal in that tre- "mendous day wherein thou shalt appear to judge the world "without distinction of persons in thy sight! Meanwhile, O "thou most just and incorruptible judge, vouchsafe to defend "our republic from the cruel blasphemy even now fulminated "against it, with what pretence of justice to thee is manifest," and concluding with the Psalmist "*Respiciat me Deus salutaris meus adiutor meus esto*," &c.

This grave scene drew the eyes of every one on Barbadori: by some he was called rash, and bold, and presumptuous; others ridiculed him as a madman; and certain of the high priest's servants even shouldered him roughly in the throng. The ambassador stood unmoved; but even here, in the very vortex of passion and corruption there were still some generous spirits bold and honest enough to admire and praise his conduct; to hail it as a brilliant spark of antique virtue and to declare that such a voice of liberty could only issue from an Italian breast! The ambassadors unable to do more for their country, with difficulty found a Piedmontese notary daring enough to draw up a formal protestation against the validity of this sentence, for which he was afterwards persecuted, and

finally banished from Avignon and all the ecclesiastical states; but taking ultimate refuge in Florence was there honourably received and rewarded. An edict soon after appeared declaring it criminal for all public officers civil or ecclesiastical to molest any individual by the authority of this anathema, in which the "Eight of War" and other citizens were especially named, under pain of death and confiscation of property *.

When the effects of excommunication were beginning to be felt faction superstition and devotion raised their threefold voice against the EIGHT: no city they declared could prosper that was deprived of the Eucharist; and many that perhaps made light of this, yet finding their property plundered both by sea and land, united in the cry; for church galleys scoured the seas and compelled Florence to oppose the pontiff even on that element. Bending for a while before the blast the seignory partly soothed the public agitation by despatching a new embassy to negotiate peace; of this Barbadori was again a member, but ere it reached Avignon the Bretons conducted by Robert Cardinal of Geneva, afterwards the antipope Clement VII. were already arrived at Asti. Little hope therefore remained of an honourable accommodation, and as Barbadori declared in his former oration that the "Florentines having enjoyed liberty for four hundred years it had become a part of their very nature and all were ready to sacrifice life itself in the cause" they now proved the assertion by pushing on the war with double vigour. Ambassadors were sent to France England and Naples to justify their conduct and deprecate the rigorous execution of Pope Gregory's censure, while to manifest their own firmness the seignory on the thirtieth of April declared the Florentine republic to be content with the conduct of its war magistrates, not only by continuing them in office for six months longer, but also by sending to each with great pomp and public ceremony, besides silver urns and other valuable presents, a

* Scip. Ammirato, Istoria Fiorentina, Lib. xiii., p. 697.

shield and pennon with their family device, and over it in golden letters the word LIBERTAS. About this period too, although excommunicated expressly by name, and in the public mind obnoxious to all the consequences of a curse so deep and startling as that lately uttered, these magistrates were nevertheless hailed by public acclamation as the "EIGHT SAINTS OF THE WAR"*.

At once foreseeing that Bologna would be the first and principal object of attack and that its defence would necessarily devolve on Florence, Ridolfo da Varano Lord of Camerino, a sagacious and expert captain, was appointed to command her armies and consequently to defend Bologna, where already under two resident ambassadors Florentine influence had become paramount. Two thousand lances under this general were marched in July to that city while all the mountain passes were strongly guarded and the peasantry ordered to retire with their cattle into fenced towns, the protection of Florence being left principally to Milanese soldiers†. Meanwhile the Bretons continued their march through Alexandria Tortona and Piacenza on Ferrara, without any opposition from either Visconte; for Galeazzo was anxious to keep on good terms with Gregory, and Bernabò very unwilling to come to an open rupture with an army of ten thousand ferocious and unscrupulous veterans in the heart of his country. After a short halt in the friendly state of Ferrara the company resumed its march, and by a priest's treachery gained possession of Monte Georgio a town only twelve miles from Bologna. Here the cardinal put every man woman and child above six years old to the edge of the sword

* M. di Coppo Stefani, Lib. ix., Rub. 754.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xiii., p. 698. —Macchiavelli, Lib. iii.

† Sismondi, on the authority of Cherubino Ghirardacci (Lib. xxv. p. 349), says, that five hundred lances, under Count Lucius Lando, were sent to Bologna by Bernabò, of whose faith Ridolfo was doubtful. But by his treaty with Florence Bernabò stipulated not to violate the pope's territory, and no other writer mentions this force. (Vide *Sismondi*, vol. v., p. 166). See also Mar. di Coppo Stefani, (Lib. ix., Rub. 760), who positively denies, for the above reason, that any Milanese troops entered Bologna.

in order to strike terror through Bologna, and he backed it by the offer of a general amnesty for all that would promptly return to their allegiance *.

This apparent lenity coupled with the fearful devastation of their country caused some to waver and occasioned the meeting of a general council where the Florentines assisted: the result was a strong resolution to defend their liberty and maintain the alliance of Florence, and sooner than return to the haughty and insolent tyranny of those under whom they had so long suffered, to undergo the heaviest calamities as freemen. The fury of Robert was unbounded at this spirited reply. "Tell them then" said this Christian prelate, "that I will not stir a step from this city, nor take rest nor pleasure until I steep my hands and feet in their heart's blood" †.

This savage burst of impetuosity only served to draw more closely the alliance of Florence and Bologna, and Robert failing to gain the latter by fair means entered into a conspiracy with some of the Pepoli faction to have it by treachery. While thus proceeding his army continued its cruel ravages in the hope of provoking Ridolfo to battle; but this wary chief mistrustful of internal treachery, held firm to the ramparts and equally resisted the enemy's taunts and his own people's impatience, for he felt that the fate of Bologna would decide the war. Leonardo Aretino who was a child at the time of these events, and therefore may almost be considered a cotemporary historian, tells us that people still spoke in his time of Ridolfo's prudent and facetious answer to the cardinal, who failing to provoke him to a battle or any external movement, at length sent a direct message to know why he would not march out and meet him. To this Ridolfo coolly replied, "*My reason for not going out is just because I do not wish to let you in.*" And he was confirmed in this resolution by the suspicion of a secret

* Cron. d' Incerto, p. 205, &c.—Leon. Aretino, Lib. viii., folio 163.—Poggio Bracciolini, Lib. iii., p. 47.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xiii., p. 698.

† Poggio, Lib. ii., p. 49.—Cronichetto d' Incerto, p. 208.

intercourse between the cardinal and some malcontents whom he afterwards detected and executed. This preserved order within, while a romantic event from without lowered the Bretons' reputation and increased Florentine confidence.

The Bretons had a white banner with the following distich.

Ahora se vedra qui pueda mas,
O los Bertoncs o' "LIBERTAS;"

and thus trusting to the imagined terror of their ferocity two Frenchmen of the pope's army, with permission from both sides, entered the city where they boldly charged the Florentines with having excited Bologna to rebel against its liege lord, offering in a haughty blustering tone to prove their words with their swords against any who dared to accept the challenge. After a short pause Betto Biffoli a young Florentine gentleman stepped forward, gave them the lie, and accepted the defiance: his friend Guido di Asciano a Senese, instantly followed; all four throwing down their hats, which according to the manners of the age were taken up by their respective antagonists while Guido exclaimed we will presently show you the difference between meeting armed men in the field and beating out the brains of infants against the walls of captured cities.

A day of battle was appointed; the lists inclosed; and in presence of both hosts the combatants magnificently armed and mounted sprang forward to the charge. Betto's antagonist fell, but before the Florentine could turn and close he was already remounted and ready to engage: again they dashed against each other and again the Breton fell, and as actively remounted. Upon this Betto disdainfully called to him to prepare for a third tilt, promising that he should not again rise and vault into his saddle so easily as he had done: at the third encounter Betto's lance bore the Breton from his seat and laid him prostrate with a ghastly wound, then leaping from his horse and placing the left knee on his antagonist's breast began to unbuckle his hel-

met for the death-blow, and would soon have despatched him had not the cardinal suddenly called out "Be content Betto and spare his life for he is your prisoner." "If he confess as much," answered the Florentine, "I will with all my heart make your reverence a present of him." The Frenchman acknowledged himself conquered, and Betto after taking his sword and dagger delivered him into the prelate's hands. During this encounter the other champions were not idle: Guido di Asciano and his antagonist tilted, wounded, and unhorsed each other; but the Senese soon recovered himself while his enemy lay motionless on the grass and became his prisoner. Thus ended the combat and the cardinal immediately presented both horses and arms with a silver belt of great value to the victors *.

The audacious vaunting of these Bretons was thenceforward a little subdued, but their cruelty augmented every moment: having no chance of Bologna they spread fiercely over the land; towns surrendered on conditions that were instantly swept away like cobwebs; houses were plundered and people massacred, even to the new-born babes that clung unconscious to their mothers' breast: at length satiated as it were with murder blood and ruin they demanded winter quarters. Galeotto Malatesta who alone remained faithful, was recompensed by receiving a pontifical command to deliver up the city of Cesina for that purpose and here, tempted by an unviolated town, their licentiousness again burst forth: the citizens were pillaged their wives and daughters dishonoured; no remorse; no shame; no restraint on their passions; cupidity avarice and sensuality were their only law, cruelty their guide and governor. Every place, private or public, sacred or divine, became their prey; neither age nor sex, great or small, masculine or feminine, escaped their guilty passions; none were spared, none respected,

* Leon. Aretino, Lib. viii., folio 163.—Poggio, Lib. ii., p. xlviii.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xiii., p. 700.

even convents were violated and sacred virgins shared the universal destiny: and all this time, neither by word nor deed, nor by the slightest show of displeasure did the Cardinal of Geneva attempt for a single instant to check their devilish course*. Complaints multiplied, lamentations were unheeded, shame banished, lust and cruelty became more rampant, and death and hell seemed to stalk through the devoted city. At last, in February 1377 the maddened citizens rose in a body and killing three hundred of these miscreants drove the rest into a quarter called the *Murata* which had been assigned to them: on seeing this Cardinal Robert instantly sent Malatesta to the insurgents to acknowledge the fault of his troops and their well-merited chastisement, but with a strange misuse of words granting an amnesty on condition of the city gates being re-opened and a friendly intercourse resumed. Their own lord being the bearer of this message the offer was accepted, for the citizens as yet knew not Robert of Geneva, and even Malatesta was deceived. Silently dooming Cesina to utter destruction and determined to make it sure, he ordered Hawkwood to move up his troops from Faenza and assist: and seeing the latter hesitate, for even the robber Hawkwood was a moment shocked! added impetuously "*I want blood—blood*"! Hawkwood brought up his men. The fears of the inhabitants thus lulled and the troops in readiness, this band of hell-hounds were all at once cast loose on their victims, and from three to five thousand men, women, and children were slaughtered, not only without mercy but with aggravated cruelty†: children after being snatched from their cradles and stabbed, or dashed against the walls, were suspended like hogs at their parents' doors.

A.D. 1377.

* Poggio, Lib. ii., p. 50.

† Ser Naddo di Montecatini (Memorie Storiche, vol. xviii., Delizie degli Erudite Toscani), says 2500, but disagrees with all other authors. He was, however, a cotemporary. *Cronichetto d' Incerto*, also cotemporary, says 3000. Leon. Aretino the same. But Poggio, and especially Ammirato, who is very minute and careful in his facts, say 5000.

these again were dragged forth to behold the bloody sight, and then murdered, the Cardinal all this while screeching for blood: "*Kill, kill, leave none alive**," was his exclamation! This at least was mercy. Few *did* escape! no rank, no age, no sex, no calling; none were delivered from the homicide: some were butchered in the streets, some in the squares, in the churches; nay on the very altars themselves young children who had fled thither for refuge were promptly sacrificed. Confusion filled the city; shrieks, wailings, and screams of horror rang through the air, mingled with ruffian shouts and hellish execrations; while ever and anon above the din were heard the shriller accents of the furious priest, "*Kill, kill, leave not a soul alive*," and he too literally was obeyed! From the softly breathing babe to the laughing girl; from the blushing maiden and pale-faced nun to the decent matron and the bed-rid man; the priest at the altar; the hooded monk; servants, masters, fathers, mothers, sons; all were murdered; save those the English suffered to escape! The English at Faenza, saith Ammirato, pillaged to the uttermost but spared life; and even here they allowed all they could to escape, for their object was plunder not blood; wherefore their conduct may be esteemed perfect mildness in comparison to that of the Bretons at Cesina. The whole population would have thus been annihilated if Hawkwood's White Company, having no vengeance to satisfy, had not only allowed but even assisted the evasion of many†.

This was the act of a Christian pastor under the immediate auspices of a Christian pope! the apostle's successor, the self-denominated representative of that Being who brought "peace and good-will on earth," whose lofty character and divine attributes have been and still are more distorted and fashioned to suit the nefarious designs of civilised man, than ever was

* Sismondi, vol. v., p. 168.

† Boninsegni, Istor. Fior., Lib. iv., pp. 577, 578, &c. — Poggio Bracciolini, Lib. ii., pp. 50, 51.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xiii., p. 704. — Sismondi, vol v., p. 167.

the hardest iron which is taken from the earth and forged for its most delicate cultivation. The conduct of Sir John Hawkwood who had not even the Bretons' slender provocation would have eternally disgraced his country if he could ever have been considered better than a daring robber and ruthless homicide whose only admirable qualities were high military talent and unconquerable intrepidity, and his descendants, if any exist, would do well not to boast of their ancestor. This massacre caused universal indignation; funeral service was performed in all the churches at Perugia, and every town of the league followed their example, for it was far beyond the barbarity of both age and country.

When the siege of Bologna was raised Florence expected an immediate attack on her own territory; but the EIGHT were indefatigable; all the mountain passes were rapidly occupied by numerous reënforcements; Malestroit and John of Buda were bribed not to enter the Florentine state even at the pontiff's command, and the army was augmented by fourteen hundred lances and a thousand infantry which were kept continually hovering on the flanks of the Bretons*. Gregory after some extravagant demands dismissed the Florentine ambassadors, and banished all others of that nation from Avignon except Cardinal Corsini; without permitting even a hope of reconciliation, but on the contrary resolving to proceed in person to Italy and direct the war. This redoubled the ardour of Florence; the league was more firmly cemented; Perugia and Assisi were reconciled; towns and passes were reënforced; rewards and honours distributed; and even Hawkwood himself was persuaded by a salary of 250,000 florins a year to join the confederacy with five hundred lances and five hundred archers besides his Englishmen. All this was however somewhat balanced by the defection of Ridolfo da Varano who either jealous of Hawkwood or with a promise of being confirmed in the

* Boninsegni, Lib. iv., p. 577.

lordship of Fabriano; or perhaps otherwise disgusted, joined the pope and carried with him the town of Fabriano which he then held for Florence. Public indignation burst out at this intelligence; he was instantly degraded from the rank of citizen which had been conferred on him; his image painted, hanging by the feet as a traitor, on the most conspicuous buildings of the town, and orders issued to all the Florentine captains and allies to ravage his lands and do him every possible mischief*. The EIGHT were confirmed in office for six months longer and another board of equal numbers created expressly to take a strict account of all ecclesiastical property, specifying what was sufficient for the possessors to live in comfort and respectability; but with powers to sell as much of the remainder as would realize 100,000 florins for the public service, and to protect the purchasers against all consequences†.

Long before Varàno's defection Gregory had left Avignon and after having been coolly received at Genoa and honoured at Pisa he arrived at Corneto in November where he was soon welcomed by the news of Bolsena's revolt and the total defeat of a detachment sent by him against Viterbo with the loss of eighty gentlemen of whom twenty were knights of the highest rank. These repeated disasters rather inclined him towards a peace, and one more embassy arrived from Florence to attend on him in Rome by his own request‡. The Florentines had vainly endeavoured to stir up that city to rebellion; but the Romans had then a free government of thirteen bannerets who carried the standards and represented the different divisions of Rome: they were also anxious to reëstablish the papal see and consequently less eager for revolution than those towns which had suffered more from ecclesiastical oppression. Gregory had been also promised the sovereignty on his arrival at Ostia, and they even consented to suppress the bannerets, while the pope

* Poggio, Lib. ii., p. 52.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xiii., p. 705.

† S. Ammirato, Lib. xiii., p. 702.

‡ Ibid., p. 703.

engaged to confirm certain popularly elected judges called "Executors of Justice" provided they would give him their oath of allegiance. Florence on hearing of this negotiation which occurred as early as December 1376, made one more attempt to enlist Rome in the common cause, and therefore addressed the following letter to that city: it was written by the celebrated Coluccio Salutati, and urged the bannerets to an uncompromising maintenance of the public liberty.

"To the illustrious men our honoured brethren, the Bannerets of Rome.

"Although we have hitherto vainly raised our voice in "exhorting you to defend with unshaken courage your own "and Italian liberty and although the only fruit of our en- "deavours has been some few letters written in an elegant "style vainly ornamented with fine sentences: nevertheless "at this moment when we behold your liberty in imminent "danger we fear not to repeat once more our sincere and "salutary counsel.

"We cannot doubt, O beloved brethren, and if you do not "willingly blind yourselves, you also must easily perceive it; that "the sovereign pontiff whom you attend with so benevolent a "disposition bears no affection towards your city; he loves "not the dwelling: it is not to reside in his own see for the "consolation of your devout people that brings him back, but "to change your freedom into servitude. When he asks for "the dismissal of your magistracy what does he desire? what "does he hope, if not to pluck down the column of Roman "liberty? what check will remain for the audacious, what "refuge for the feeble, if your sacred body on whom depend "the peace, the courage, and tranquillity of Rome, be dissolved "at the pontiff's arrival? And though the pope should reësta- "blish the city in all its ancient renown and beauty; though "he were to elevate the Romans to all the majesty of their "ancient empire; though he were to gild your walls with gold:

"yet if it were at the expense of freedom it would be your "duty to reject it. We only implore you to conduct "yourselves as becomes Romans with whom virtue "and liberty are hereditary property. A.D. 1377.

"While you still are able and that there yet is time; while "the oppressor of domestic freedom is not within your walls, "provide for your safety; provide for the safety of the Roman "people. The moment you require it, the very instant we "receive your signal we will aid you with all our power as "if it were in defence of our own freedom, our own individual "safety; for we well know that from the hour that your people "bow to the yoke, light as it may at first appear, we shall not "be strong enough to deliver you"*.

This was immediately followed by the offer of three thousand lances, nor was the exhortation entirely fruitless; for although military assistance was rejected the Romans made better terms with Gregory, but did not receive him the less joyfully on his arrival in January 1377. The bannerets indeed laid their official ensigns at his feet, but resumed them on the following day, and continued their independent government as if he were not present. Those Florentine ambassadors who still followed his court could do nothing with the angry pontiff: he demanded peace on his own terms, they on theirs. While yet at Avignon he had listened to the overtures and exhortations of Saint Catherine of Siena, (then called the Blessed Catherine) whom the Florentines, to show their anxiety for peace, had instructed to bring about a reconciliation, and he dismissed her with full powers to treat; but nothing followed. The papal ambassadors arrived at Florence in August and insidiously attempted to stir up the people against their government, especially against the EIGHT whom they denounced as ambitious chiefs battening on public misery and holding office long beyond the period fixed by law; while under the specious name of liberty,

* Sismondi, vol. v., p. 169.

they were attempting to subjugate the people. All that Gregory required they declared was the deposition of these men and then Florence might have peace on her own terms. The gonfalonier justified the Florentines, reasserted their ardent desire for peace; and defended the Saints' conduct. The pope became doubly exasperated at this proceeding and rendered his anathema still more stringent; but he was ill obeyed in Italy and the Florentines threw off every restraint: hitherto they had respected the interdict and closed every place of worship, but now the priests were compelled to resume their functions and celebrate every religious rite as if no censure had ever been pronounced *. Previous to this and in a general council open to everybody where more than a thousand citizens assembled, the Florentine ambassadors who had returned from Avignon proved the strenuous exertions, which had been made to restore tranquillity by a public statement that 700,000 florins had been offered to the pope for peace, and all to be paid in six years; but that he demanded more than a million, with other concessions so extravagant as to be utterly inadmissible. Besides this he declared that he would have no peace; but with the help of God and his friends he would one day wreak his vengeance upon Florence: war therefore continued to devastate Italy; the cruelty of the Bretons augmented; and with the exception of Bolsena's having been retaken with horrid slaughter, fortune everywhere favoured the Florentines. The EIGHT were again elected and confirmed in their office, against their own wishes, until February 1379 †.

But all Italy was now tired and the war began to languish; allies were sensibly cooling and some had made their peace: at Bologna faction which had begun to work in March, at last

* Poggio, Lib. ii., p. 53. — S. Ammirato, Lib. xiii., p. 707. — Sismondi, vol. v., p. 172.

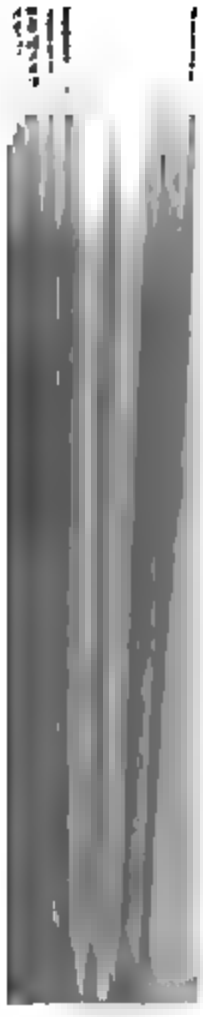
† Poggio, Lib. ii., p. 54. — Cron. d' Incerto, p. 212. — S. Ammirato, Lib. xiii., p. 709.

succeeded in restoring that city to the church, and on the twenty-first of August a treaty was signed at Anagni stipulating that a pontifical vicar alone was to reside there and the city remain in all other respects free. The Florentines thus deserted by their most powerful ally and bending under the weight of war became generally anxious and even clamorous for peace, and the Bishop of Urbino a new papal ambassador artfully proposed their ally Bernabò Visconte as arbitrator. This at once roused their suspicions, for Visconte was well known in Florence, but they consented and a congress accordingly assembled at Sarzana on the twelfth of March 1378. The Florentines were not deceived; for by a secret agreement Gregory XI. and Bernabò had engaged to indemnify themselves for the expenses of war by sacrificing the republic: luckily this pontiff died in March and saved them 800,000 florins which their ally had kindly consented that they should pay to recover the pope's favour. A.D. 1378.

After a stormy conclave ruled by a more stormy population, eight French cardinals were overcome by four Italians and a pope of the latter nation was elected on the eighth April in the person of the Bishop of Bari under the name of Urban VI. War then ceased rather by tacit consent than any formal treaty; but Urban bearing no malice against Florence and soon having enough on his hands by the election of an antipope, for a certain sum removed the interdict and restored her to the church.

Thus ended this celebrated and ably managed war of three years' duration caused by the ambition tyranny and cupidity of French priests who had appropriated to themselves almost all the great church dignities to the entire exclusion of natives, and who were moreover bent on the total destruction of Italian liberty*.

* Leon. Aretino, Lib. viii. — S. Ammirato, Lib. viii. p. 712. — Muratori, Annali.



Avignon to Rome — Gregory XI. t
Hungary and Poland · Louis the Great
—Murad, or Amurath I., Ottoman Emp

CHAPTER XXVII.

FROM A.D. 1378 TO A.D. 1390.

FLORENCE who for three years had been the life and soul of Italy; by whom so many cities great and small, far and near, friends or foes to each other and to her; were combined in one determined mass against their foreign tyrants; Florence who with the magic of a single word, and that word LIBERTY, had roused half the Italian peninsula against its oppressors; this same Florence could not secure herself for a moment from the heartless tyranny and struggles of domestic faction. The war had cost between two and three millions of florins, and far more in the confiscation and destruction of Florentine property by foreign nations: from this spirited sacrifice, coupled with the vigour, unity, and successful issue of her councils in its prosecution, one might well suppose them to have been directed by the head and heart of a united people. But this was not so: they proceeded almost exclusively from the more democratic portion of the commonwealth under great disadvantages; and throughout the whole contest internal commotion disturbed the community. Its rulers were harassed by the continual attacks of a powerful factious and relentless opposition, against which they struggled with a resolution only equalled by their talents and patriotism. The magistracy of the Eight composed exclusively of merchants and tradesmen, were all of the democratic and popular party, therefore their original election and unusually extensive powers displeased many of the

A.D. 1378.

more aristocratic citizens, while a repeated prolongation of almost unlimited power in the same hands alarmed others and increased their opponents' jealousy. The awful and even sacrilegious nature of this contest the subsequent anathema, and the consequent seizure of Florentine property in foreign states, were so many additional causes of trouble, and so many convenient levers for faction: wherefore every act including all warlike operations was roughly handled and defamed by the most bitter and powerful antagonists, while the people generally were steady in their cause. The former led by the Captains of Party, the Albizzi, and the old nobility, urged on a series of reckless admonitions and indiscriminately denounced both Guelph and Ghibeline of the adverse ranks, without measure or thought of justice, and to such an extent as to injure the whole fabric of the commonwealth*. As early as 1374 a relation of Giorgio degli Scali, one of the old Guelphic nobles whose family had become popolani in 1343, was admonished as a Ghibeline: this alarmed Giorgio for himself although he had always acted with that party and powerfully influenced it, for he was a long-sighted, bold, and able statesman; but to revenge this injury he soon after as gonfalonier of justice proposed a law by which no noble should be allowed to hold any property in land, or retain any "*Fideli*" or vassals, and where these last already existed they were to be emancipated from every obligation of feudal service. This law, never enforced, was ultimately repealed; but Giorgio Scali became a marked man, and only one year elapsed ere he also fell a victim to the Guelphic party†. So determined a blow shook the whole community, for Giorgio was clever; powerful, generally feared and respected, and a thorough Guelph: his friends were astounded: "Giorgio is admonished," said they, "my turn may come next afterwards thine: there is "now no safety: the law was against Ghibelines not Guelphs:

* Leon. Aretino, Lib. ix. 748.—Scip. Ammirato, Ist., Lib. xiii., p. 694.
† M. di Coppo Stefani, Lib. ix. Rub.

"none can any longer hope to escape but those who join their "faction." Such was the general feeling, but as yet terror predominated for intimidation spread far and wide and paralysed all the community*. The captains became more bold, arrogant, and presumptuous; not a citizen, however Guelphic, felt secure; and so deep and universal was the dread, says Ammirato, that no tyrant after a newly-suppressed revolt was ever so terrible to his own subjects as these magistrates had become to the Florentines. Wherever they appeared the people rose in fearful reverence, and stood bare-headed until they passed, meekly bowing as if to absolute princes. They walked the streets like monarchs: to speak evil of them was more dangerous than blasphemy and visited more severely: their alliance was tremblingly courted; their daughters were received without portions, those of others were offered to them with large dowers, but all through terror and intrigue: they ordered merchandise to be sent them on credit but to demand payment was dangerous: their myrmidons were seen in every part with threats of exile and hopes of favour; money was extracted by infamous means; intrigue and apprehension pervaded every class; the admonished were persecuted, unfairly taxed, frequently injured in the most tender points of domestic affection; and under all this the Florentines still believed themselves free and fought bravely for their national independence †.

So artful was the Party Guelph that in despite of every law and periodical change they managed that the office of Captain should continually circulate within a certain set so closely linked that nothing could penetrate or resist them; and in this they only displayed the usual ingenuity of Florentines who were peculiarly skilful in evading or paralysing every law directed against undue power for the preservation of republican

* M. di Coppo Stefani, Lib. ix., Rub. 755.

† M. di Coppo Stefani, Ist., Lib. ix., Rub. 766, 767, 775.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xiii., p. 709.

equality. Nor was the grand jury of twenty-four citizens, created in 1366, a formidable obstacle; for the web was so woven that whenever their names were drawn, if that of an obnoxious person appeared, one of the captains would immediately rise and say that "He had seen the citizen leave Florence that very morning for his villa" or some other such falsehood; upon which the name was replaced in the election purse, and so on of others until that of some devoted minion or stauncher partisan appeared. The most cruel and mischievous of these magistrates was most applauded by his colleagues and on quitting office frequently received the honours of a shield and pennon, as a citizen well deserving of his country *. They lost no opportunity of augmenting a power already preposterous; and any man, even the most notorious Ghibeline, who either privately or publicly defended them was certain of favour: if a prior he was immediately lauded as a genuine Guelph, and the adverse party similarly debased and persecuted. They even adopted a standard emblazoned with Charles I. of Anjou's arms and named Benghi Buondelmonte their gonfalonier as if they were proceeding against some foreign enemy; but its drapery only appalled their trembling countrymen.

So fearful was this power that in 1378 Alesso Baldovinetti and Lorenzo di Dino were condemned to the block merely because the former by Dino's counsel dared to present a petition against this new and formidable gonfalonier who had injured them both. They were only saved by a legal objection of the podestà who refused to execute the sentence but nevertheless committed them to a dungeon, whence they vainly implored an extension of mercy from their angry tyrants †.

The great power and popularity of the EIGHT was wormwood to this faction, and in 1376 a more vigorous attack was resolved

* Mar. di Coppo Stefani, Lib. ix., p. 709.

† M. di C. Stefani, Lib. ix., Rub. 755, Rub. 767.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xiii., 771, 779.

on; first by the never-ending admonition, and secondly by annulling the right of petition established in 1372 against those who seriously injured their weaker neighbours. This privilege had in fact been excessively abused and became a mere instrument of private malice or knavery, yet on that very account was perhaps, a more powerful weapon against the higher orders of citizens. Creditors made use of it to ruin their debtors even for insignificant sums: imaginary obligations of a century old were claimed on the strength of forged documents and their fulfilment audaciously demanded from the descendants of these visionary defaulters, who unable to prove the fraud were forced either to compromise or be placed by petition amongst the "Grandi." The facts too were frequently more distorted by the plaintiff's assertions of having only received abuse and threats and outrage in answer to his just and legitimate demands. In this way a vexatious power of persecution was placed in plebeian hands and used by them as heartlessly as by their more powerful neighbours; for although (as we are told by the cotemporary historian Marchionne di Coppo Stefani) most of those who were thus punished well deserved it, yet not for the crime of which they were so infamously accused.

We have seen that the object of this law was to protect the weak from oppression by the powerful; but its action thus became in a manner reversed and its reform, as a cloak to future repeal, was the first object of the Capitani: a gonfalonier and three priors of their own faction, and on that account omnipotent in the seignory, carried this decree which would have been welcomed from any other quarter but these men were suspected; ordinances so beneficial were not usual, and when a threat of punishment was annexed to the failure of any cause instituted by petition, thus rendering that privilege completely nugatory, public indignation rose high: but the remaining priors were fearful of opposing any of the party Guelph against

which even a whisper was perilous. The fearful expression "*Fa contra alla Parte*," "It is against the Party," was pregnant with a terror that may be more easily conceived by the fact that in 1373 Bartolo Siminetti amongst other oppressive laws decreed, that even if a citizen's duties were to keep him a whole day without food and that when he at last sat down to eat another were to come and say, "*This bread is against the Party*" he was bound to refrain from eating and instantly leave the table! *

After the fate of Dino and Baldovinetti the captains determined that no rank or station should escape them, and in April 1378 they had the audacity to admonish Giovanni Dini, one of the EIGHT, although in the full execution of his office and a great favourite of the people. This stroke above all others completed the public disgust, and in fear, anger, and pity, so audacious a piece of tyranny was contrasted with the mildness, the virtue, and known justice of Dini himself; but the people became still more exasperated when it was known to proceed from the private malice of Simone Peruzzi, a member of the EIGHT; the unworthy successor of Magalotti who had died the year before; and this only because Dini had blessed the memory of the latter as a more discreet statesman; Peruzzi had in fact divulged some of their secrets but his son happening to be then one of the captains Dino was sacrificed, and replaced by a creature of their own. The enemy's stronghold now became so much reduced that no bounds remained to the captain's audacity: ninety citizens had been disfranchised in eight months, and Salvestro de' Medici would also have graced the list had he not as yet proved too powerful and besides was so notorious a Guelph that no charge of Ghibelinism could stand for a moment against him: he was a dangerous antagonist and soon proved it†.

The vast number of half-ruined and plundered merchants

* M, di C. Stefani, Lib. ix., Rub. 766. 779, 781, 786. — S. Ammirato, Lib. xiii., pp. 712, 713, &c.
† M. di C. Stefani, Lib. ix., Rub. 778,

that from various countries unceasingly poured into Florence, the victims of papal injustice, kept augmenting the Guelphic forces; many of them joined in the cry that Florence was in danger from the warlike propensities of the EIGHT and that nothing but thinning their ranks by successive admonitions could save her: the captains were encouraged by these malcontents, and even Saint Catherine of Siena a religious enthusiast of some talent, though held by many to be a hypocrite and somewhat light of character, was employed as mediatrix but still as a stanch friend of admonition*.

The accusers thus reënforced redoubled their former energy: when any person was admonished a bevy of young men awaited his return from the council-room, and from the great staircase of the captains' palace followed him home with hootings shouts and unseemly noises such as, "*Now go and make war on the church.*" So that the insults were even more galling than the injury†. Thus did this poisonous faction envenom the community; but the evil had spread so widely that the ancient proverb "*Firenze non si muove se tutto non si duole*," was once more on the point of being verified. The better disposed now began to understand each other, mutual confidence succeeded to general distrust, and it was currently whispered that if there were but one resolute man in the seignory to stem the torrent by a vigorous decree, all evils would soon be remedied and Florence saved, for there were more in office disgusted than pleased with the captains of the Party Guelph. These malcontents soon united with the EIGHT, and because in May 1378, Salvestro de' Medici was almost sure to be drawn as gonfalonier he became the loadstar of the discontented, and promised everything: it was the beginning of great changes and furious contention, of Guelphic downfall, and a fierce democratic revolution which soon made the republic tremble‡.

* M. di C. Stefani, Lib. ix., Rub. 773.

† Stefani, Lib. ix., Rub. 705.

‡ M. di C. Stefani, Lib. ix., Rub. 787.

The legitimate constitutional government and the Captains of Party thus placed in stern opposition were determined on a conflict; but the latter failing in an insidious attempt to exclude Salvestro de' Medici from office were willing to conciliate him by some important concession; while he, cautious even in the removal of evil; or more probably aware that what was offered would not satisfy the people and therefore must strengthen his own hands as their champion, finally consented to be appeased. It was agreed that no man should thenceforth be admonished who was not really a Ghibeline; that the name of any person should not be put to the vote for admonition more than three times in the council of twenty-four; and that the ordinances of justice should be enforced against the great*. The heads of the Guelphic party at this time were Piero degli Albizzi, Lapo da Castiglionchio, Niccolò Soderini, Bartolo Siminetti and Carlo Strozzi: its body the greater part of the rich and powerful popolani and the old nobility: on the other side were the EIGHT, Giorgio Scali, still smarting under admonition, and Tommaso Strozzi, besides the Medici, Alberti, Ricci, and all the inferior citizens. The force of their opponents appeared so formidable to the Guelphic party that nothing but complete destruction and exile could possibly decide the contest and they resolved to drive them from the city as their ancestors had the Ghibelines. A plan was arranged for seizing the public palace and effecting a complete revolution in the state: Lapo pressed its immediate execution asserting that delay was the ruin of every enterprise; but Piero with all the caution of age wished it postponed until the Baptist's feast when the city would be full of peasantry, and their own adherents more easily concealed in the crowd.

All this was previous to Salvestro de' Medici's being drawn for gonfalonier, and Lapo was the more anxious on that very account because the election-purses were empty of names

* S. Ammirato, Lib. xiii., p. 714.

except for one renewal of office which was known to be almost exclusively Ghibeline, and hence a certainty of their arch-enemy's accession to power. Piero proposed a remedy either by boldly admonishing Salvestro himself, or else somebody belonging to the colleges of his quarter, and in filling up the vacant place the purses were so empty that Salvestro or a relation was sure to be drawn which would effectually disable him from becoming gonfalonier under the law of *Divieto.* Lapo unwillingly consented, and with the remark, that he who wants all things to concur in his projects will never make the attempt or do so at his peril.

The moment of action passed; the scheme was seen through; a colleague was admonished, but the vacancy remained unfilled. Salvestro became gonfalonier of justice, and the above-noticed attempt at reconciliation was the result. This agreement was soon broken by the Captains of Party; violence was used with the twenty-four; the names of Giraldo di Pagolo and Francesco Martini only six weeks after were put to the ballot for admonition no less than two-and-twenty times instead of three, and after a blasphemous oath on the occasion by Bettino Ricasoli; through sheer weariness they were condemned *.

Salvestro di Alamanno de' Medici was one of what now began to be called the "Noble Citizens," and a man of infinite shrewdness, talent, and resolution: he was the first of his family, says the historian Michele Bruto, who taught his posterity how by courting the rabble and oppressing the noble citizens they would make their way to the lordship and mastery of the republic †. Salvestro had long been familiar with public affairs, and the surrender of his own brother to public justice although with the promise of his life proved at least that self-devotion was not the uppermost consideration of his mind. His strength was in the lower orders of the commonwealth, of whose

* M. di C. Stefani, Lib. x., Rub. 789. —S. Ammirato, Lib. xiv., p. 716.

† Giovanni Michele Bruto, Ist. Fiorentine, Volgarizate da Stanislao Gatteschi, Lib. i°, p. 19. Firenze, 1838.

rights he was the unflinching advocate, and hating the adverse party determined to curb their audacity: the breach of compact appeared to embitter his enmity, and with Alberti, Strozzi and Scali he resolved to enforce its observance by a law that should serve as the first step towards the party's downfall, and open a way for all admonished persons to recover their rights. Being in his turn "*Proposto*," (the proposer of laws or president of the seignory) an office lasting only three days at a time but with great authority; Salvestro determined to carry his law through the colleges and council of the people in one and the same day after having prepared his friends for the event; but he met with such a storm of opposition in the former as to convince him that only some decided step could meet the crisis. Slipping away therefore during this agitation he appeared suddenly in the popular council and from a conspicuous place appealed to its judgment. "He thought that he had been "made gonfalonier, not to hear private causes, but to look after "the public safety, correct the insolence of the great, and "modify those laws which were bringing the commonwealth to "destruction. These duties had continually occupied his mind, "and he believed that he had found a remedy; but by the "malignant spirit of certain men he was prevented from doing "any public good; and even they themselves, who were "especially the people's council, were not only refused the "right of deliberation but even of hearing it proposed; where-"fore seeing himself thus hindered from carrying any measures "for the public welfare he saw no reason for longer holding an "office which he was either really unworthy of, or was consi-"dered by others to be so. He would therefore instantly "retire, and resuming the conduct of his domestic affairs, leave "the place open to some citizen of greater virtue or better for-"tune than himself"*. He then quitted the assembly. Those

* M. di C. Stefani, Stor. Fior., Lib. x., Rub. 789, 790. — Macchiavelli, Lib. iii°.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xiv., p. 717.

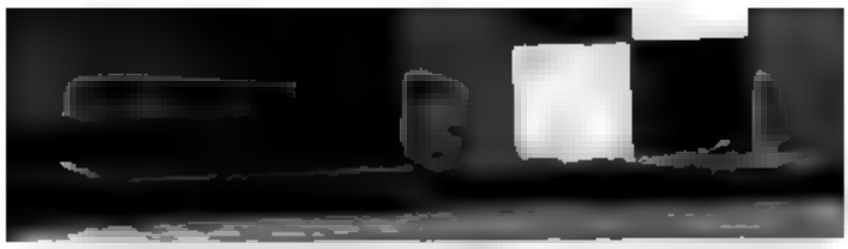
who were aware of the scheme, and all who wished for a change, took instant advantage of this discourse, and great excitement prevailed; the seignory and colleges ran from their apartment to appease this new tumult and meeting Salvestro on his way out detained and reconducted him to the council chamber. The whole assembly was in commotion; many of the noble citizens were insulted, menaced, and even outraged: Carlo Strozzi was collared by a tradesman, reminded that his reign of oppression was over, and would have been killed but for the assistance of his friends. But the agitation was completed and all Florence roused into tumult by Benedetto degli Alberti who placing himself at the palace window, with a loud voice called on the people to arise; and shouts of "*Viva il Popolo; Viva il Popolo*" were immediately echoed through every street. This cry was well understood; the tramp of men was soon distinguished; the palace square bristled with lances, helm and cuirass began to gleam, crossbows were bent, banners fluttered in the air, and reiterated cries of "*Viva il Popolo*" completed the stirring scene. The Guelphs also armed, but being slightly supported soon dispersed in alarm, wherefore no weapon was unsheathed; but the terror-struck colleges hurried on the bill, which going straight to the "Consiglio del Popolo" was at once carried by acclamation *.

There is nothing easier than to stir up revolutions especially in small states, if men's minds be previously prepared by oppression, and nothing more difficult than to arrest them afterwards; it is the time for soothing not excitement: one man kicks the ball and thinks he can govern it; a stronger than he takes it up; another and another, until the first player is left out of sight and forgotten and his original ball shattered to pieces. Salvestro de' Medici meant to cast down his enemy and enjoy the triumph; he was deceived; the spell was too

* M. di C. Stefani, Lib. x., Rub. 790.—Macchiavelli, Lib. iii°.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xiv., p. 718.

potent: a spirit was raised that he could not master and he became frightened at his own enchantment. Men's passions had been long seething under a high pressure, and that once removed one wide burst of feeling shook the entire community! All Florence trembled; the shops closed like flowers before a storm; armed citizens were seen preparing for danger; goods were removed to the convents, churches were filled with private property, other valuables consigned to secret places and everything presaged a tempest. The trades met and chose a syndic each, priors and colleges assembled with them and discussed the means of peace; opinions differed because interests differed and numbers had no wish for tranquillity: there were also many wrongs to revenge, and private suffering was confounded with public good. Nothing therefore was done.

Next day but one the trades again armed and united under their several banners, and the priors in consternation assembled a council: it had scarcely met when the palace square was once more thronged with moody citizens arrayed under their various ensigns and followed by a fierce and numerous populace. The government hastily created a *Balià* which being composed of the Seignory, colleges, eight of war, captains of party, and syndics of trades, besides other citizens, it was hoped would insure confidence and ultimate tranquillity. But outrage had already begun, the house of Lapo da Castiglionchio was burned and plundered while he escaped in the disguise of a monk to the Casentino, bitterly regretting his weakness in consenting to Albizzi's delay. Piero and Strozzi were also concealed but their property suffered for evil spreads rapidly; fires multiplied, the prisons were emptied, convents lost their sanctity, and those even of Santo Spirito and the Angioli were no protection against plunder. Houses and palaces fell one upon another like cards; those of the Pazzi, Strozzi, Albizzi, Migliori, Guadagni and Buondelmonti were all burned and plundered and the storm still raged: but Piero di Fronte the prior



rode out at the head of an armed band and saved the public palace Santo Spirito and other parts by his prompt intrepidity. Night closed in and was tranquil. When morning dawned the Balià hastily met and restored all admonished citizens to their rights on condition of not exercising any public functions for three years; they then annulled the oppressive laws of Siminetti and declared Lapo di Castiglionchio and his colleagues rebels. A new Seignory of peaceable citizens was drawn and Luigi Guicciardini made gonfalonier of justice; but without any immediate effect: the tempest was not over; the shops opened not; arms were not laid by; and watch and ward were kept throughout the city.

The new magistracy deemed it imprudent to enter office with the usual processions and public ceremony and all was performed in the palace; this was blamed as vile and timid, but they laboured hard for peace and partly succeeded: arms were now forbidden, the shops slowly reopened, and the peasantry already assembled to aid their lords, were forcibly dismissed; patrols then traversed the still unquiet streets and a hollow calm succeeded *.

All might now have gradually subsided into peace had not the provocation been so deep; but great injustice had been committed, much crime perpetrated, many injuries remained unexpiated; the admonished were naturally vindictive, not over scrupulous, and far from satisfied to wait three years for office: they were bold numerous, and oppressed, and had fiery materials under them wherewith to operate; they had also justice. The trades again met elected new syndics and demanded that no citizen who had held public office since 1310 should be admonished even on suspicion of Ghibelinism, unless his case had been first examined by the Seignory and colleges, the ten of liberty, and a consul from each art; also that new election purses should be made for the captains of party and the old

* Ammirato, Lib. xiv., p. 721.

ones destroyed. These demands were discussed, thought presumptuous and rejected: the trades once more armed, the colleges were again intimidated, and the petition then passed without amendment. Thus half measures, as is usual, crept timidly on to whole ones when too late; what would have been at first received as a boon was now extorted as a right; success in all cases begets confidence, confidence audacity, and new demands start up: first justice, afterwards vengeance; then oppression changes sides, and power, ambition, tyranny, all are again seated and in full action under different colours. The middle classes, still led by Salvestro and his party, almost deified him: people rushed to see him as a wonderful thing, he was followed by crowds and pointed out to the children as the "*Liberator of his country and the breaker of all ties and bonds of servitude*"*.

By this party the people were told, and perhaps truly, that no security could be expected until many of their antagonists were either expelled the city or destroyed; wherefore commotion augmented, and the Seignory sending for all syndics and magistrates of trades convinced them by a sensible speech of their error in demanding more for the mere sake of vengeance, when enough had been already done to satisfy every claim of justice.

"Tell us honestly," said Guicciardini, "what more can you "fairly demand? You wished to humble the captains of party; "it is done: you desired that their lists should be destroyed "and the office reformed: we have consented. You demanded "that the admonished should be restored; and we have per- "mitted it: we have at your intercession pardoned those who "have burned houses and plundered churches, and multitudes "of honoured and powerful citizens have been banished to "please you. The great at your bidding have been restrained "with new ties; what will be the end of your demands? How "long will you continue to make an evil use of our liberality? "Do you not perceive that we can bear defeat better than you

* S. Ammirato, Lib. xiv., p. 721, &c^a.

"can victory?" This speech was received with respect, the deputation retired, and two magistrates were appointed in conjunction with the syndics to examine what remained of grievances and report on the subject*.

But the fire had now descended; the lowest class of workmen were also aggrieved: *they* never possessed a voice in the commonwealth but suffered much from bad administration, and therefore joined the general movement: they too had committed crimes; had burned and plundered, infringed the law in many ways, and now feared with reason that those who before hounded them on, having gained what they wanted would leave their followers to that punishment which many felt conscious of deserving. They moreover generally hated their masters and were discontented with the low wages and injustice they received. In Charles of Anjou's day when the citizens were divided into twelve trades, afterwards increased to twenty-one, there were certain officers called consuls who governed each, and the republic being essentially mercantile their power became paramount. This double class of "Arts;" the former comprised principally of liberal professions and merchants, the latter of meaner trades; combined with other causes generated two parties, because the ancient Guelphic citizens under whose auspices the Party Guelph had been established, belonged to and were supported by the former in opposition to the latter, and the gonfalonier of justice had invariably been chosen from the higher class. They were in fact and consequences though not in name, an aristocracy and democracy with opposing tastes views and sentiments under the appellative, "*Citizen;*" and hence the continual bickerings heart-burnings and tumults already related: but as many of the lowest callings did not enter into these distinct divisions of trades, they were placed in masses under that particular art with which their business was most nearly connected.

* Macchiavelli, Lib. iii°.

The "*Arte della Lana*" or wool and cloth trade rose far above the rest in extent opulence and authority, and in its various branches employed a greater number and variety of workmen, especially of the lowest classes, than any other. On feeling themselves oppressed these poor people had no other tribunal of justice than that composed of their oppressors, and therefore did not always receive it, the former being judges in their own cause, and the latter without appeal; wherefore the conflict of masters and workmen was often in full activity, although on very unequal terms, in the workshops of Florence.

All this engendered a constant feeling of asperity between these classes, aggravated by a degrading and painful consciousness of complete dependence even for daily bread. These enmities continually broke forth; and being now coupled with riots, arson, plunder, and other illegal acts rendered them almost desperate, wherefore they assembled to take measures for their own protection.

These lower classes of Florentines had, during Walter de Brienne's tyranny, acquired the name of "*Ciompi*" a corrupt Italian pronunciation of the French term *Compère* with which the Duke of Athens' soldiers were wont in familiarity to address their Florentine companions; and hence this name had long become a general appellation of the populace. Perceiving the turn of affairs, and that Nuto da Città di Castello, a new and severe Bargello, had arrived to punish them, they all assembled at a place called *Ronco*, then outside of the Porta Romana and were addressed substantially as follows by one of the ablest and most experienced of their ringleaders.

"If our purpose were now to deliberate on the propriety of "arming ourselves to burn and plunder the dwellings of citi- "zens and despoil churches, I am one of those who would "deem it wiser to pause, and it may be would rather continue

" in quiet poverty than run the risk of so dangerous a game. " But as arms have already been used and much mischief " done, we should now reason as men who would not leave " their work incomplete or themselves in danger for what has " already been committed. Had we not before this time learned " our lesson from others, necessity would now teach us what " we ought to do: you see the whole city bursting with hatred " against us, the citizens are all reconciled and the Seignory is " ever sure to favour our employers. Are they not spreading " fresh nets for us? preparing new forces against us? we " must think of two things in our meetings; security for past " crimes and more liberty for the future. Now the surest " way to obtain pardon for old faults is in my opinion to commit new ones: let us therefore redouble our offences, our " conflagrations and our robberies; but let us have numerous " accomplices, for where many sin none are punished: petty " offences are chastised, but the great and heavy are rewarded; " and when many suffer few attempt revenge, because general " injury is easier borne than individual wrong. In the multiplication of evil therefore will forgiveness be more easily " found and a way opened to secure those things we deem " essential to our own liberty. It appears to me also that we " go to certain triumph, because those who have the power to " oppose us are both disunited and rich; their disunion will " give us the victory and their riches in our hands will afterwards enable us to maintain it. Be not abashed at their " ancient blood with which we shall be taunted; for all men " having sprung from the same stock are equally ancient and " fashioned in the same mould. Strip us all naked and you " will see our similarity. Let us dress in their clothes and " they in ours; *we* shall then seem noble and *they* ignoble " because riches and poverty is the sole distinction between us. " It grieves me to hear that many amongst you repent of what " has been done and would abstain from more; now if this be

" true you are not the men I took you for, because neither con-
" science nor infamy should alarm you: those who win, no
" matter how, are never disgraced; and of conscience we
" should hold no account because where the fear of starvation
" and imprisonment prevails, as it does with us, that of hell
" neither can nor ought to be considered. Look around you
" and observe how all those that attain great power or riches,
" do so by force or fraud and then varnish over the profits of
" deceit and violence with some respectable name; while on
" the contrary they who through folly or prudence shun such
" means remain for ever in poverty and servitude. Faithful
" servants are always servants, and honest men are everlast-
" ingly poor. None ever emancipate themselves from slavery
" and misery but the audacious and unfaithful, unless it be the
" fraudulent and rapacious. God and nature have placed every
" man's fortune in his own hands and have thus inclined him
" more to rapine than industry; rather to the wicked than the
" good arts of mankind. Hence men devour each other and
" the weakest suffers. We should therefore use force while we
" can, and fortune now favours us beyond our expectations.
" The citizens are still disunited, the Seignory irresolute, the
" magistrates intimidated, and ere they recover themselves we
" shall easily overpower them: we shall then rule absolutely
" in this city, or at least so nearly as to command indemnity
" for the past and threaten our enemies for the future. I
" acknowledge the danger, the rashness of this enterprise;
" but where necessity prompts temerity becomes prudence,
" and in great undertakings men of spirit take no account of
" danger. What commences with peril finishes with reward,
" and it is ever dangerous even to fly from danger. But
" where death torture and fetters are prepared it is more
" terrible to remain where we are than seek for security,
" because in the first our calamities are certain, in the second
" doubtful. How many times have I heard you complain of

" the avarice of your superiors, of the injustice of your magis-
" trates? Now is the time not only to liberate yourselves,
" but to become so much their superiors that they will com-
" plain of and fear you more than you do them. Opportunity
" now flutters before you but when once on the wing you shall
" ever after seek for it in vain! You see the preparations of your
" enemies! Let us be before them, and whichever first arms
" will surely have the victory, will ruin his enemy and certainly
" exalt himself; honour will then be the reward of many and
" security of all " *.

This discourse inflamed the unquiet spirit of his hearers who instantly resolved on sedition as soon as a sufficient number of conspirators were enlisted in the cause; whereupon Simoncino Buggigatti, Pagolo della Bodda, and Lorenzo Riccomanni swore in all the others to be true to themselves and their party and act unitedly. The twenty-first of July 1378 was fixed on for revolt; but magisterial suspicions were awake; the first ringleader was suddenly arrested, fettered, tortured, and the whole plot discovered: he had already given full information, but the question was applied for more details, and during these torments he accused Giovanni Dini and several of the admonished citizens as chiefs, and Salvestro de' Medici as the principal mover of all †. It so happened that while Simoncino suffered, one of his accomplices was regulating the palace clock and therefore able to see and hear enough to convince him that no time was to be lost; instantly descending he ran off to San Friano roused up the conspirators, assembled all the malcontents, and at daylight on the twenty-first, a part for sedition, a part for defence; the whole population was in arms.

Every company remained to protect its own quarter except two who obeyed the general summons and repaired to the public palace; but the Seignory had only eighty lances of the

* Macchiavelli, Lib. iii°. † Gino Capponi, Tumulto de' Ciompi, p. 230.

regular troops assembled in the square, so that seeing themselves unsupported even these two companies returned to protect their families *. The Ciompi of Santo Spirito, San Piero Maggiore and San Lorenzo were in arms and fiercely demanded their prisoners; these being refused they burned the gonfalonier's house and forced the Seignory to submission: then seizing the standard of justice, under its broad shadow they pursued the work of conflagration; where that led they followed, and it fluttered to the cry of any who had a wrong to revenge or an enemy to injure. But there was some high spirit at that time amongst them, no robbery was committed; punishment and vengeance occupied them more than avarice; they were resolved not to be taunted with the name of plunderers; and cloth, beds, pearls, and silver; valuables of every kind, were committed indiscriminately to the flames, nay the historian Stefani says he saw a man stabbed in the back with a lance for attempting to keep a fowl and a piece of salted meat †.

Salvestro de' Medici, on the confession of Simoncino, was examined by the Seignory and acknowledged that proposals had been made to him by the Ciompi which he treated with that contempt he thought they deserved but owned his fault in not giving timely information: he was dismissed, but with difficulty, and more through fear than any conviction of his innocence. Salvestro was still the popular citizen, and in this day of madness was knighted with upwards of sixty more, by the victorious Ciompi ‡. Amongst the favourites so honoured were Benedetto and Antonio degli Alberti, Tommaso Strozzi, and even Luigi Guicciardini whose house had been burned that very morning! But friends and foes, all were indiscriminately honoured or injured by a wild mixture of hate justice and gratitude in this unregulated crowd §. The Seignory were left to their

* Macchiavelli, Lib. iii°.— S. Ammirato, Lib. xiv., p. 724.
† M. di Coppo Stefani, Lib. x., Rub. 795.
‡ S. Ammirato, Lib. xiv., p. 724.
§ M. di C. Stefani, Lib. x. Rub. 795.

own resources; all those citizens not in the plot kept near their family mansions, the insurgents had augmented to six thousand, the government was null; and thus passed the night. Before daylight the gonfaloniers of companies were menaced by the populace and compelled to unfurl their flags, which many well disposed citizens joined from pure apprehension: but these banners and the standard of justice carried an appearance of legitimate authority that emboldened them to summon the Podestà's palace, and on his refusal to surrender they attacked and carried it: this became their head quarters, and a deputation from the government soon after arrived to hear their demands *.

They insisted that the wool trade should no longer have a foreign judge; that its inferior branches, such as combers, carders, washers, and others, should have consuls of their own and be no longer subject to the corporation; that the dyers, tailors, barbers, and many others should also have consuls and priors; that no more interest should be paid on the public debt but the whole principal be honestly discharged in twelve years; that all the banished, except rebels and traitors, should be recalled; that the penalty of loss of limb should be abolished and a fine substituted; and that none of themselves should be liable to imprisonment for any debt under 50 florins during two years, with various other financial regulations: amongst them was a stipulation that Guido Bandiera a wool-carder and one of the new knights, because he was the first to revolt and behaved well in the subsequent transactions should have 2000 golden florins from confiscated property; and that Salvestro de' Medici to support his new honour should be endowed with the rent of all the houses on Ponte Vecchio amounting to 600 florins annually; that a general pardon should be issued for all offences committed since the eighteenth of June; that the admonished should be completely emancipated; and that three priors instead

* Gino Capponi, Tumulto de' Ciompi, p. 237.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xiv., p. 728.

of two, and one-third of the other public officers should be chosen from the fourteen minor trades. Besides this many favourite and obnoxious citizens were named both for rewards and punishments, but there was no demand for blood; and finally that Giovanni Dini should be reinstated amongst the eight councillors of war.* These demands were far from wild or unreasonable, most of them were salutary, and moreover showed a consideration for those above them little to be expected from a vexed and angry multitude smarting under oppression: neither could they well be resisted and therefore passed the colleges; but to give them the force of law it was necessary that they should also pass the various councils, until which time the people promised to be quiet. On the twenty-second of July the latter became suspicious and impatient; assembling before the palace they alarmed the members, and the petition soon became law with only ten negative votes out of a hundred and eighty-four. Suspicion was now augmented amongst the insurgents, and seeing their mood change the Seignory felt so much alarm, that one after another they all escaped to their own houses except Alamanno Acciaiuoli and Niccolo del Bene who finding that they could not retain their colleagues, (not to appear, saith the historian, more brave than wise), also departed and thus left the public palace in the hands of the EIGHT of WAR and the populace†.

The former who appear to have acted in concert with Salvestro and the admonished citizens, had encouraged the Seignory to retire and leave them in possession of the government; they therefore lost no time in attempting to secure a new administration of more congenial politics but were disappointed‡. When the palace was taken Michele di Lando, an unshod, half-naked wool-comber bearing the standard of justice, instantly ascended

* Gino Capponi, Tumulto de' Ciompi, p. 241.

† Mem. Storiche di Ser Naddo di Montecatini, p. 13.—G. Capponi, Tumulto de' Ciompi, p. 243.—M. di C. Stefani, Lib. x., Rub. 795.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xiv., p. 729.

‡ Tumulto de'Ciompi, pp. 246, 247, &c.

the stairs and entered the council chamber: there stopping and turning to the people he said, "This palace is now yours and the city entirely in your power! What do you mean to do?" He was ordered himself to assume the government and rule as best pleased him: Michele had been a soldier; was an able prudent and sagacious man, more indebted to nature than fortune, and a real lover of his country: poor and ragged as he was, he had inspired his fellow-labourers with unusual respect, and such confidence as soon raised him to a conspicuous place in the insurrection *. Fearlessly accepting the charge he at once took measures for restoring public tranquillity: a gallows was erected in the palace square to check plunder and conflagration, and its first victim was the new Bargello who being suspended by the leg was in a few moments literally pulled to pieces; so intense was public hatred against him! All robbery and burnings were forbidden on pain of death; the syndics of trades were dismissed and new ones chosen; the Seignory and colleges were deprived of power; the election-purses were all committed to the flames, and the EIGHT of WAR commanded to quit the palace in order to show the world that Florence could do well without them. Lando then assembled the new syndics; elected four priors, two from each class of trades, and four more from the lowest classes of the people: he made new election-purses; divided the community into three parts; namely the major and minor arts, and those so recently created. This made Florence a real republic, as the whole body of people had now for the first time a voice in the commonwealth. He confirmed to Salvestro de' Medici the rents of the Ponte Vecchio; appointed himself Podestà of Empoli; and to many other citizens of known popularity he gave places to secure their friendship: for either the influence of sudden power, or a long-sighted sagacity which led him to imitate the unjust steward; but more probably a strong convic-

* Leon. Aretino, Lib. ix., folio 167.

tion of the necessity of supporting the higher orders; seems early to have affected Michele di Lando*.

The people too thought that these measures leaned mainly towards the rich; they became discontented and turbulent, assembled under the palace, ordered the Seignory to descend on the Ringhiera and confer with them about matters that regarded public safety: they were armed and numerous; had elected a "*Council of Eight*" with sovereign authority in Florence; issued their commands with haughtiness from the church of Santa Maria Novella, and were not unaccompanied by some of the higher classes of citizens†. At the palace they were tumultuous and insolent; ordered the formation of a new Seignory to take place in their presence, rejected multitudes of names from pure caprice or at the cry of some obscure individual, and spent the day in violence. More demands were made next morning; Salvestro de' Medici was to lose his rents; the other dignities so lately given were to be cancelled, and amongst them the podestàship of Michele di Lando himself. He had spent 100 florins on a horse, and had assumed or received the high distinction of shield and pennon; this raised suspicions against him in which Salvestro de' Medici and Benedetto degli Alberti were included: the government became alarmed and wavering but negotiations continued and the insurgents, according to Stefani, would have gained their ends if Lando's honours had remained inviolate: but the people would not suffer even the distinctive pennon, and thus lashed him into fury‡.

The city had now two rival governments; both powerful, both usurped, and both composed of the lowest orders of society: that of Santa Maria Novella decreed that eight deputies from their body should reside in the palace and confirm or reject all

* Macchiavelli, Lib. iii°.

† Leon. Aretino, Lib. ix., folio 167.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xiv. p. 732.

‡ Macchiavelli, Lib. iii°.—M. di C. Stefani, Lib. x., Rub. 803.—Memorie Storiche di Ser Naddo, p. 19.

acts of the Seignory, besides other strong resolutions which were notified to the latter by two insurgent members with the alternative of immediate approval or subsequent coercion. This mission was accompanied by all that vulgar insolence which is so often mistaken for liberty, and the gonfalonier was reproached with his conduct to those who had exalted him: what truth and justice was mingled up in these reproofs can now be only conjectured; for the Florentine historians were all citizens of the upper class, and more or less tinctured with such a spirit of hatred and contempt for the populace as in such matters clouds their veracity. Their high praise of Michele Lando was perhaps merited; but we may believe that something more than simple justice on his part was required to draw it forth in unmeasured terms from an antagonist faction; and his subsequent exile proves that with many of them fear was more predominant than affection or esteem. However this may be, Lando was not a man to bear tamely the insolence of others or allow the dignity of gonfalonier to be menaced, or even slighted in his person with impunity: exasperated by the deputies' behaviour he started up, drew his weapon, wounded both, and then imprisoned them. This rendered the multitude furious and Lando at once prepared for opposition: he had the citizens with him, for they hated the Ciompi and felt his importance as the friend of order; but he had also spread a politic rumour to which circumstances gave a plausible colouring, that the insurgents wanted to call in a foreign master to their aid, and thus by enlisting public feeling united his party more firmly*.

The Eight of Santa Maria Novella sounded to arms; the bells of San Paulo rang a stormy peal, and those of San Friano answered them; San Giorgio, San Niccolò, Beletri, and Sant' Ambrogio, all chimed in with jarring tones; and the insurgents were soon united at San Friano. Lando on the other side rapidly assembled the companies; the great campana sounded a

* Boninsegni, Lib. iv., p. 628.—Mar. di Coppo Stefani, Lib. x., Rub. 804.

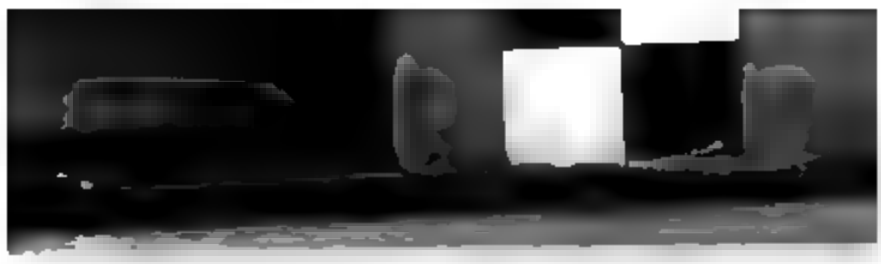
storm, and the palace square soon echoed to the clash of arms: Giorgio Scali commanded within the palace, and while Lando marched to Santa Maria Novella where he expected to find the insurgents, they arrived by another road at the seat of government. Both sides were loth to commence, and even after Lando returned and secured all the surrounding streets an attempt was made to reconcile them: chance, as often happens, finally began the conflict, and fortune ended it by a complete rout of the Ciompi: flying from the city in all directions they left Michele absolute master of Florence and on the following day he resigned his office in honourable triumph*.

This victory gave spirit to the citizens who resolved to have none of the Ciompi as priors in the new government: Lando too was of this mind, and gave a hint at parting that they were weakest in the Seignory and might be easily ejected: no sooner was he gone than tumults recommenced and shouts of "*To arms, to arms, down with the Ciompi*" filled the palace square. A meeting of the consuls of trades was immediately convoked by the priors and a resolution passed that no Ciompo should be eligible to that dignity but that the two new corporations of inferior trades might remain; that five of the priors were to be chosen from the sixteen minor trades and four from the others but the gonfalonier alternately from either section; and thus in proportion the colleges. In consequence of this a Ciompo called Baroccio who was gonfalonier of justice, with a prior of that class were immediately expelled and replaced by Giorgio Scali and Francesco di Michele†.

Thus was tranquillity for a while restored with considerable increase of political power to the lower classes; but the reins of government again fell into the hands of those citizens who had commenced the revolution: so sure it is, that unless sup-

* M. di C. Stefani, Lib. x., Rub. 804. —Boninsegni, Lib. iv. p. 630.

† Historie di Giovanni Cambi, p. 126, vol. xx.—Delizie degli Eruditi Toscani.—Mar. di Coppo Stefani, Lib. x., Rub. 805, 806.



ported by extraneous riches and unusual intelligence, the poor alone will never be able to accomplish any permanent political changes in a state. Almost all the Ciompi's acts were annulled by the new government, and a modification of the two principal councils was established. The first, called the Captain of the People's Council, was composed of a hundred and sixty citizens; that is forty from each quarter, and twenty from each class of trades The second called the Council of the Podestà or Community, was similarly chosen and equally numerous as regarded popular citizens; but with an addition of forty members from the aristocratic ranks, divided equally amongst the four quarters of the town. They could be assembled by the functionaries whose names they bore and by the Seignory, yet could discuss nothing but what had previously passed the executive government. A "Petition" or Bill therefore went, the day after it had been approved of by the Seignory and two colleges, to the Captain of the People's Council; and the next day to that of the Podestà, which gave it as much the force of law as if it had been personally decreed by the whole Florentine nation: the Consuls of Trades and other magistrates had a right of assisting at both, and the community was thus represented by about four hundred citizens popularly chosen. A new police magistracy was created to protect the city and contado from plots robbery and conflagration; and lastly a great council of *Richiesti* was called together in which all were invited to propose measures for the public good, as much dissatisfaction still prevailed and men's minds were far from tranquil. The two Ciompi wounded by Lando were put to death after confessing to seditious practices which involved thirty-six other citizens, who not appearing were condemned in goods and person. Those citizens knighted by the Ciompi were invited to have themselves dubbed afresh by the republic and Guelphic party, and their installation was accompanied by a great festival and magnificent ceremonies to wash out the stain of original sin.

During the July revolutions peace had been concluded with the pope for a payment of 250,000 florins in four years; and in October the interdict, which Florence had voluntarily returned to after the death of Gregory, was altogether removed. The gonfaloniership of Andrea Salviati for November and December passed quietly, and an important law for the preservation of peace and public economy was during that time renewed. It ordained that no war should be made; no troops cross the frontier; no new league be formed; no military assistance promised; no old alliance dissolved; no castles, towns, or fortresses be received or taken; unless by a general vote of the nation through its representatives the Seignory and Colleges, the popular Captains of the Party Guelph, the Ten of Liberty, the nine Conservators of Commerce, and two Consuls of each trade; besides other salutary provisions. But good laws seldom remained long inviolate amongst Florentines; discontent was ever floating in the air like Macbeth's dagger as an object for ambition to clutch at, and even the last days of this eventful year were darkened by a fresh conspiracy against the state. It was detected and seasonably suppressed but with the condemnation more or less severely of seventy-six citizens of whom some were executed; nay so widely extended was the plot that it was found dangerous to proceed and all further inquiry necessarily ceased. The government itself was unpopular; the general discontent still great; and exiled Ciompi, noble Popolani, and old aristocracy, filled all the Italian cities with exiles and weakened the commonwealth *.

The terrific power of the Party Guelph was certainly annihilated but their antagonists soared high and haughtily: Giovanni Scali, Salvestro de' Medici, Benedetto Alberti, and Tommaso Strozzi were omnipotent; and though the republic had been snatched by them from the mere populace, the lower

* Mem. Storiche di Ser Naddo, p. Rub. 810.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xiv. 27.—M. di Coppo Stefani, Lib. x., p. 738.

class of citizens still remained more powerful than that of noble Popolani. The latter were therefore compelled to cede, and by contenting the former endeavour to dissolve their connection with the Ciompi; this policy was also favoured by all those who wished to bruise those citizens that under the reverenced name of Guelph had ruined so many of the community, wherefore 1000 florins were publicly offered for the head of Lapo da Castiglionchio.

The great distinction between noble popolani and minor tradesmen which if not generated was widened by the struggles of the Ricci and Albizzi thus became enlarged and proved the source of future evil, so that following Macchiavelli, the two parties may henceforth be distinguished by the appellations of *Popular* and *Plebeian* *.

The first months of 1379 passed quietly in exertions for the restoration of order: a new scrutiny refilled the election purses with greater numbers of more equally chosen citizens for the lists had before only contained the names of inferior uneducated trades-people, even those of foremen and apprentices, to the exclusion of more enlightened men. A commission was given to thirty-one citizens; one from each trade and eight promiscuously chosen; to reunite the city and divide all public offices equally between the major and minor arts except that of the Mercanzia or tribunal of commerce, which being a court of admiralty and international law, required peculiar legal knowledge and acquirements and therefore was principally formed out of the superior trades †. The ordinances of justice were also relaxed and nobles partially admitted to power in every department, so that this seignory was generally known as the "*Union Priorate.*" A.D. 1379.

It was but a name! Dissatisfaction, too widely spread too deeply rooted, soon began to sprout, and a plot devised by

* Macchiavelli, Lib. iii°. † M. di C. Stefani, Rub. 812, Lib. x.

Pagno Strozzi prior of San Lorenzo to overthrow the existing government, cost seven citizens their heads and drove eighteen others to condemnation and voluntary exile. A new estimate of real property with a view to taxation was decreed, and along with it a census which unluckily has but imperfectly reached us; yet it appears from other sources that in 1380 there were 54,747 taxable mouths, which enjoying all the rights of citizenship would include but few if any of the mere populace, and yielded about 30,000 florins of revenue *.

But such measures did not produce tranquillity. the waters were yet agitated and no real calm followed the late tempests; the Ciompi continued formidable, their anger was still dangerous, and faction ran high and confusedly like the sea after a storm: above and below, outwardly and inwardly, society was equally moved, and a vicious system of criminal justice gave full scope to its humours. Life, honour and property, all depended on three foreign magistrates; the *Podestà*, the *Captain of the People*, and the *Executor of the Ordinances of Justice*. Every trial was secret: examination, torture, judgment, death all proceeded from one powerful hand, from one dreaded place, and almost at the discretion of a single head †.

It was then illegal to put any man to death unless convicted by his own confession; a law just and even humane in motive but involving fearful consequences because few made this confession willingly; hence the necessity of torture and its Procrustian bed of horrors. These foreign officers were seldom so honest and firm as to withstand the influence of government and its faction and when moved by this bias forbade all hope to their antagonists. There was no publicity of trial, no idea of modern justice; heads fell from the palace wall and dropped into the street without creating surprise or

* M. di C. Stefani, Rub. 815, Lib. x. — Ristretto di una Gravezza posta l'anno 1380, vol. xvi., Delizie degli Eruditi Toscani.

† Ricordi di Giovanni Morelli, p. 144.

inquiry: it was enough that the Seignory ordered, that the podestà did it; and he was often chosen for his known character and qualities; not those of an upright judge but as the ready instrument of faction and less the distributer of justice than revenge. According as passions worked or calm prevailed, so varied the administrative character of Florentine justice: not but what many men of a higher stamp, of sterner virtue and more generous feelings, were occasionally chosen; but these were the exceptions. Individuals were perhaps not more barbarous than the times; it was the dismal system of an unenlightened age, not the individual men that perpetuated evil, and the everlasting conflict of ungovernable passions within her walls aggravated it beyond endurance at Florence. The hand tires and the heart sickens at the records of these ceaseless acts of violence and blood; yet the misery must have been sharp, the wrong deep that so rankly nourished them. Vengeance ever outlived injury and was never sated except by the total destruction of an enemy, for fear and danger were awfully yoked to the existence of an antagonist faction.

A strong party of the admonished in concert with many Ghibelines had now become jealous of plebeian influence and its great supporters, Scali, Strozzi, Albizzi, and Medici: others displeased at having no share of political power formed a party under the name of "*Discontented Guelphs.*" Continually plotting against the government they were jealously watched and oppressed; but from their connexion with exiles, princes, and disbanded soldiers (now rapidly condensing into disciplined companies) they were feared also. It was therefore deemed prudent to retain Hawkwood along with Lucius and Everard Lando who severally commanded the English and German companies; and to conclude a defensive league for five years with Bologna and Perugia by which a joint force of sixteen hundred lances, each having two armed horses and a Ronzino, including two hundred mounted Hungarian archers, was

to be maintained in readiness. Scarcely was this accomplished when a new conspiracy came to light, the work of a hypocritical devotee called Gianozzo Sacchetti: this man by an affected piety had delivered himself from prison and at the same time swindled a fellow-prisoner out of some valuable jewels; with these he repaired to Lombardy and there became intimate with Benedetto Peruzzi a bosom friend of Lapo da Castiglionchio, who resided at Padua. About the same time Charles of Durazzo supported by Louis of Hungary and Pope Urban VI. was on his march from Germany to dethrone Giovanna, and this was deemed by the exiles a fair occasion to promote revolution in Florence. Sacchetti became their agent and carried written assurances of support, whether false or genuine, in the name of Charles of Durazzo to the discontented Guelphs of that city. Meetings were secretly held, but Thomas Strozzi and Donato Barbadori then on a mission to Charles, being suspicious of the close intimacy of Sacchetti with Lapo's friend, gave timely notice; wherefore Sacchetti was arrested and beheaded, the plot laid open, and many more citizens severely punished. This hypocrite was scarcely cold when another conspiracy with more extended roots began simultaneously to show itself at Volterra, Siena, Bologna, and other places; the result was an attack on Fegghini by the "*Fuorusciti*" or exiles and its narrow escape from capture; besides which a close correspondence between them and Durazzo was detected and again Florence fell into confusion and perplexity. Twenty citizens were condemned, but loud clamours against partiality to the great and severity to the small gave more vigour to this excitement which augmented when Strozzi and Barbadori returned, the former strenuously affirming the existence, the latter denying any knowledge of this last conspiracy. Barbadori himself had recently been on friendly terms with the exiles and therefore was strongly suspected notwithstanding his high reputation and former service; and Hawkwood almost simultaneously

sending notice of another plot, for the particulars of which he demanded 50,000 florins, completed the public alarm. Besides this, letters arrived from Arezzo, Pisa, and Bologna, saying that a large body of Ciompi, exiles, and others were uniting and concentrating with Durazzo's troops at Imola; and that banners had been made at Bologna emblazoned with the Guelphic arms and a naked hand grasping a broken sword; all which portended evil.

At length on the seventeenth of December Strozzi and Giovanni Dini suddenly alarmed the priors by producing letters from Count Antonio di Bruscolo giving notice of an outbreak which was to take place on the twentieth and naming a certain Bruno di Giovanni as an accomplice. Torture soon extracted the secret from Bruno, and Charles of Durazzo was again detected as an accessory. Florence was instantly surrounded with troops; the palace armed and victualled; Piero Albizzi, Filippo Strozzi, Donato and Bartolommeo Barbadori, with other gentlemen of rank were arrested; the whole population in high excitement clamoured for instant execution; they soon armed; the shops closed, and every symptom appeared of a new and terrible hurricane. The magistrates in vain declared that they could detect no guilt in the prisoners; they were silenced by wild, but not unfounded cries that the great escaped while the small were punished. A commission of fifty-six individuals chosen from the various magistracies was immediately formed for further investigation; but this was too slow a process; the shouts for blood redoubled, and threats of fire and sword enforced the imperious mandate.

The Podestà and Messer Canti di Gabrielli Captain of the People were steady to law, and refused to condemn without the personal confession of the prisoners: torture was therefore applied and the weaker confessed their guilt; upon which Carlo Mangione, Filippo Strozzi, and three others were decapitated. When the hungry crowd saw no more heads drop, their fury

became boundless; they threatened to burn the houses, the wives, and the children of the prisoners with the palace and Captain of the People himself, if execution were longer delayed: but he held out nobly; and when even his own guard caught up the general frenzy they were dared by him in a strain of honest indignation to join the rest and take his life and that of the prisoners too if they chose; but resolutely declared that if the axe were on his neck he would not put a single man of them to death except on a self-acknowledgment of guilt. When the storm was at its height the wild scream of a female maniac rang shrilly through the air at the fall of a bloody head, and struck such a panic as suddenly dispersed them, nor was it for some time that they again had spirits to assemble.

At last the prisoners' friends represented to them the danger incurred by their families, the impossibility of escape, and the glory of a brave self-devotion for the sake of all they loved: Piero Albizzi at once took the lead and urged his companions not to let their last hours obscure a whole life of honourable conduct, and as no hope remained it was better to die calmly like brave men and save their families from ruin. The same spirit soon moved them all and sending straightway for the captain they asked what they were required to confess: with the same unshaken principle that had hitherto supported him Messer Canti replied that he could tell them nothing: if guilty they were to own it; and if he after due investigation should be convinced of the fact then his duty would be to condemn and execute them.

A real or fictitious confession was made to the apparent satisfaction of this magistrate, for their guilt or innocence were never certainly known to the public, and Albizzi, Cipriani Mangioni, Siminetti, Giacopo Sacchetti and Donati Barbadori were all decapitated: Barbadori was sentenced by another judge nor was his former reputation at Avignon, nor his dying eloquence of any avail against popular fury. Yet all were believed innocent, and deemed to have fallen a sacrifice to the

malignant arts of Strozzi and even of Benedetto Alberti, who naturally dreaded the re-ascension of this bold and tyrannical faction. Other proofs were indeed alleged of their guilt, but as nothing was then too base or violent for party spirit, and success or defeat a matter of death or ruin; any excess even in such a man as Alberti may be credited, but scarcely justified even on the right of self-preservation.

Thus died the once powerful Piero degli Albizzi, so long the dictator of Florence and author of so much misery to his country! One day while entertaining some friends at a magnificent banquet and in the height of his prosperity, an unknown hand laid before him a silver cup filled with sweetmeats, and at the bottom of all a large iron nail; as a memento it was said that the wheel of Fortune had gained its height and should be nailed fast, for if it continued turning he would sink with it to the depths of adversity*.

After these executions the madness gradually subsided, and Florence sank once more into a sort of disturbed repose, but not for long: victors and vanquished were filled with terror, and every accident, no matter how trifling, caused a new persecution: fines exiles, admonitions, new laws, more rigorous orders, were continually pouring down on the heads of suspected enemies.

Forty-six magistrates in conjunction with the Seignory were as a Balià to purge Florence of all suspicious persons: thirty-nine citizens were in consequence admonished and numerous families placed amongst the "Great" while as many more of the old nobility were relieved from this injurious distinction. By the members of this Balià the names of twenty citizens were secretly presented, with an understanding that if written twice over by each individual they would A.D. 1380.

* Giovanni Cambi, Storia, p. 127.—Delizie degli Erud. Toscani, vol. xx.—M. di C. Stefani, Lib. x., Rub. from 812 to 836.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xiv., p. 739 to 748.

be reduced to the rank of nobility; that forty more, if only once written, should have the "Divieto" for three years; that a certain number of those who suffered condemnation in 1378 if again condemned by two-thirds of the Balià should be declared rebels for ever and the remainder banished for two years; citizens at the distance of a hundred, and Ciompi fifty miles from Florence. The city had now some respite, but more from external fears than internal satisfaction: the great schism between Urban VI. and the anti-pope Clement VII. who held his court at Avignon and was supported by queen Giovanna, unsettled men's minds and caused long enduring troubles. That queen was now in years and had taken Otho Duke of Brunswick for her fourth husband without giving him the title of king or much part in the government; her support of Clement drew down the anger of Urban and Charles of Durazzo called "Carlo della Pace," was invited to dethrone her; but his advent led as we have seen to new levies, new plots, new companies, and new devastations*.

Alberigo di Barbiano who about this epoch formed the Italian company of "Saint George" was the father of native condottieri and a better system of military tactics, which produced some of the greatest captains of the succeeding age. He and Count Lucius Lando suddenly spread over Siena like a torrent, crossed the border, advanced within eight miles of Florence and levied contributions on all the Tuscan states; but Alberigo was finally defeated at Malmantile by Count Everard Lando the Florentine general, and on this occasion many exiled citizens who had joined the plunderers were condemned as rebels and their property confiscated. Hawkwood was once more engaged and remonstrances were made to the king of Hungary against Durazzo's open countenance of the exiles and free companies in their plots and attacks on Florence. When this prince arrived at Verona his ambassadors requested the

* M. di C. Stefani, Lib. xi., Rub. 860.

aid of Florence against Giovanna; but the Florentines still revered the memory of Charles and Robert, and refused to injure their descendant by offensive leagues or military assistance*. Durazzo's anger kindled against them; he refused their presents and dismissed their ambassadors: this was felt, but did not then weigh so heavily on the public mind as the crime of having seized church property during the late unholy war. Whether from a sudden fit of repentance or the cunning working of priestcraft does not exactly appear, but it was now resolved to restore the "accursed thing." Those who had purchased ecclesiastical possessions could not enjoy them; many had been almost compelled to purchase, many more were persuaded, but it went against the conscience of all; especially as the clergy frequently refused their religious succours, even in extremity, to those that still held them. A decree therefore passed for their restoration at the public expense, and thus one source of uneasiness was removed, for the priesthood was not to be despoiled with impunity†. Durazzo at the invitation of the Boscoli and Albergotti of Arezzo occupied both Agubbio and that city in August and September, and the Florentine ambassadors at the former place were ordered to honour him in the name of their country: one of them, Giovanni di Moni, a man of low birth but high reputation, was murdered by three Florentine exiles as he mounted his horse to meet the prince: the whole community was indignant at this, not only from Moni's high rank and office and his general popularity, but also from the conviction that such an act could not have been committed without Durazzo's connivance, and that the exiles would finally induce him to attack Florence itself. The assassins were outlawed, their houses and property destroyed, and two new magistracies, "THE EIGHT OF PEACE" and "THE EIGHT OF WAR" were created for public safety. The latter

* M. di C. Stefani, Lib. xi., Rub. 851, 852, 861, 862.
† M. di C. Stefani, Lib. xi., Rub. 857.

despatched Hawkwood with twelve hundred lances to occupy Montevarchi as a corps of observation; the former sent an embassy to Charles, but he had suddenly quitted Arezzo and marching through the Senese territory violated that of Florence near Staggio. Peace was however concluded about the middle of October for a loan of 40,000 florins, and Charles marched on to Naples*.

Florence was again quiet; but many illustrious citizens disgusted at the new system of equality, (the election-purses being now filled with at least a thousand names instead of three hundred) and not liking to be shouldered in the public councils by men of the lowest class and manners, had taken refuge in their villas to enjoy a cheap but mournful tranquillity†. As there was a great difference in the expense of living within and without the gates; the tolls diminished in consequence of this secession and the revenue suffered accordingly: this being distasteful to the dominant faction these seceders were all ordered to reside in the city or be taxed in their villas, a proceeding never before heard of in this free community. Nor was this all; the overwhelming influence of the minor trades; particularly the two lowest; produced cruel, absurd, and extremely mischievous laws: an exorbitant price was affixed to those goods exclusively manufactured by themselves, with severe penalties against taking a lower sum: this was fairly blamed as audacious and unjust; but existing laws made by their former masters had already restricted the prices of all manufactured goods to a certain specified profit *and not more;* these minor arts, in a similar spirit, confined their own to a certain price *and not less:* the rich were praised, the poor abused; the former complained that the new law absorbed all profits on their merchandise; the latter had often fruitlessly lamented that in order to keep down prices they were abridged in wages

* Ammirato, Lib. xiv., p. 751.—M. —Leon. Aretino, Lib. ix. di C. Stefani, Lib. xi., Rub. 873, 874. † Stefani, Lib. xi., Rub. 882.

and comforts, and scarcely left a living profit: but the consuls of trades were now mostly disciples, not master manufacturers, and this bye-law was carried triumphantly against the higher arts*.

Another of their laws was to give 10,000 florins of rebels' property in the public funds to the Eight of War to persecute and cause to be secretly assassinated any rebel citizen in any form or mode that the latter might deem expedient; and this, besides its innate villany, in the teeth of an edict for the security of public creditors, which rendered funded property inviolable whatever might be their political crimes! Nor was this an insulated breach of national faith; the historian Stefani, an actor in these scenes says like Dante that there was no permanence in Florentine reforms or legislation; but every day brought new orders and counter-orders which secured nothing earthly but confusion. Amongst other proceedings of the democratic faction at this period, one of the most interesting is a law for national bankruptcy: it was death to propose any alteration of the public interest on national loans, which had existed since the days of Charles Duke of Calabria in 1327 and even two years earlier, at the rate of five per cent. per annum; and it was also made illegal under the same penalty for any higher rate of interest to be received†. But in the Pisan war of 1362 none were found willing to lend at that price, and those who were compelled to do so, (for such things it seems are consistent with republican institutions) complained loudly of injustice. Wherefore the government unable to obtain money at this interest, consulted Messer Piero di Ser Griffo notary of the reformations and a man of great financial experience about the manner in which the law could be most

* M. di Coppo Stefani, Lib. xi., Rub. 875, 877.

† According to Varchi (Storia Fiorentina, vol. v., Lib. xiii., p. 37), the first mounts or public stocks were created from loans made in 1222 and 1224, for which twenty-five per cent. per annum were given until the whole loan was repaid in forty years. The register of this stock was called "*Il Libro de' Setti Milione.*"

easily evaded, and he at once suggested that those who lent 100 florins in cash should be credited in the national books for 300 at five per cent. This very simple expedient was adopted, and the new stock or "*Monte*" thus formed was called the "*Mount of Three for One.*" Then came the revolt and war of San Miniato with its attendant charges, which led to the formation of another Mount called the "*Two for One,*" and thus money was borrowed rapidly at the ruinous interest of ten and fifteen per cent. besides the great expense of war. This system continued until the republic became insolvent but from terror of the penalties none dared to propose a remedy: the evil becoming intense it was at last resolved by two-thirds of the Seignory and colleges to suspend the law itself for a whole month and a decree to that effect was carried on the seventh of December 1380. On the twelfth a law passed which really reduced the public interest to five per cent. by placing every creditor on the national register for the exact sum lent in specie, and then cancelling the two mounts. 60,000 florins of annual interest were saved by this fraud, making a virtual difference of 120,000 in the public resources: but the distress and mischief were frightful because numbers of people allured by a great return sold land and houses and even quitted trade to invest their money in the public funds; besides which, this property had changed hands over and over, so that some made profits of twenty-five per cent., some even more, and about five thousand persons were suddenly involved in great distress and difficulty, no financial operation having for a hundred years created so much disturbance *.

At the same time an alteration, apparently to encourage the payment of arrears, was made in the "*Estimo*" or tax on real property, which gave five per cent. retrospectively on present payment in direct violation of a law relating to this tax which

* M. di Coppo Stefani, Lib. xi., Rub. 883, 885.

prohibited interest; and to this was added more unjust decrees which confiscated exiles' funded property; all showing to what a low state of moral and financial poverty wars and civil dissension had reduced the commonwealth *.

The government was now in fact a mixture of every sort of person: admonished citizens; restored exiles; merchants; low traders; common foremen; and unoccupied gentlemen; all confusedly mingled and clashing at every turn; the whole fabric tottered and vacillated, nothing seemed steady or secure; each individual for self-preservation attached himself to some more potent citizen, and society became divided into a succession of small knots, foes to each other and fearful of all around them. Scali, Strozzi, and Alberti backed by their own party still maintained the ascendant; for Salvestro de' Medici probably disgusted with the conclusion of his own efforts appears no longer on the scene. Scali, who seems to have been a ruthless demagogue, although spoiled by power was still unsated with revenge; and Strozzi, in addition, was daily exasperated with the taunts and mortifications which his official conduct as one of the "Eight Saints" of the war, now so unholy, exposed him to when all national danger had disappeared: both therefore gave themselves up to vengeance; and any man except their own, who might be elected to office was sure to fall either by their arts or tyranny; so that to them were attributed almost all the executions, exiles, and admonitions that had convulsed the city since they came into power. Benedetto degli Alberti a man of far milder character disapproved of this conduct; and as he first opposed the Guelphs and then the Ciompi, so did he now recede from those who not only equalled either of the others in atrocity, but employed spies in every corner of the town to preserve their authority †. A.D. 1381.

* M. di Coppo Stefani, Lib. x., Rub. 883, 886.
† M. di C. Stefani, Lib. xi., Rub. 901.—Leon. Aretino, Lib. ix.—Scip. Ammirato, Lib. xiv., p. 756.

Rigour and suspicion daily augmented, and the violence of these two demagogues caused universal terror, so that a spark only was required to inflame the community: just at this moment a citizen called Giovanni Cambi was unjustly accused by one of Scali's creatures of practices against the state, and the judge was determined to make his accuser suffer that punishment to which the accused if guilty would have been condemned. Finding that neither prayers nor power could save him Scali and Strozzi rescued the miscreant by force of arms and the captain of the people's palace was plundered in the fray. This magistrate instantly declared to the Seignory that if not supported he would throw up his office but was finally persuaded to remain by the assurance of redress. A consultation was then held with several influential citizens particularly Alberti, for they knew if his concurrence were not previously obtained Giorgio Scali would prove too powerful an adversary; but disgusted with the latter, Alberti consented to his ruin, as any man in those days who wished for public order and the free administration of justice must have done. A writ was accordingly issued for Scali's arrest yet trusting to his popularity with the lower classes he disdained to fly: this popular favour however had ceased, and while the more sagacious Strozzi effected his escape Scali was taken, condemned, and instantly beheaded. On the scaffold he lamented the people's ingratitude, unconscious that it was he himself who had changed, not them; and then seeing Alberti amongst the spectators, exclaimed, "And thou Messer Benedetto, hast thou also con-
"sented that I should receive an injury which had I been in
"thy place I never would have consented to have done to
"thee? But I here announce to thee that this day which
"ends my sorrows is only the beginning of thine"*.

A.D. 1382.

His words were prophetic, and his death left the commonwealth in a ferment: injury, mortification, vengeance, power,

* Macchiavelli, Lib. iii°.

and the fall of enemies, had made Scali a tyrant, and he died unlamented: four of his chief minions were soon discovered and sent after their master: one was torn to pieces even by the Florentine boys, who cutting off his hand, urchins as they were, trailed it in puerile but disgusting triumph and tossed it into the Arno! Such was in those days the reckless breeding of children to scenes of blood hatred and cruelty! A great body of citizens were necessarily in arms at the capture and death of Scali; many from precaution, others from their own private views, but all the city was full of sects and factions and none liked to disarm until their objects were accomplished. The nobles were indignant at exclusion from power and still mourned the capitani's downfall; the noble Popolani could not brook any political equality with the minor trades and more detested Ciompi; the minor trades were not satisfied with what they had acquired, and the Ciompi fearful of losing the little they had already gained were eager for more extended liberty.

Thus Florence remained full of humours; the government fluctuated in anxious vicissitude; parliament succeeded parliament; Balià, Balià; injury was heaped on injury; danger on danger; each sect striving for its particular ends, none for the public; all struggling for command, all scorning to obey; indulgent to themselves, severe to their adversaries society was overwhelmed in the uproar and the whole state in unutterable confusion. Yet this was almost the only period of genuine republicanism in Florence! Nevertheless the noble Popolani began once more to respire, for Scali was dead Strozzi banished and their minions executed; Alberti had changed, Salvestro withdrawn, and the whole faction was humbled; wherefore hopes were now revived of driving the plebeians from power and once more assuming their ancient dignity.

The cry of "Long live the Guelphs" had already been loudly vociferated at the recent executions and gave singular

force to, if it were not the cause of Giorgio Scali's prophecy. The rich and powerful wool-trade uniting with other friends, assembled in arms to demand a reform of the constitution; this appeal was irresistible; parliament immediately assembled and created a Balià composed of the seignory and colleges with two members from the Capitani, the Ten of Liberty, the Mercanzia, and two from each civic company, with dictatorial powers: tumult was simultaneously prevented and public feeling ascertained by sending Giovanni Cambi, the captain of the people, twenty new-created knights, and a band of soldiers with the Guelphic standard, besides many noble Popolani, to scour the streets with cries of "*Long live the Guelphs.*" As no signs of discontent were manifest the wool-trade, now become chiefs of this party, waxed bolder and again meeting in arms demanded that the two new arts should be dissolved and every rebel and exile recalled from banishment: there was no demur to this for the sword is an impatient listener, wherefore after short debates the decree was passed and executed. But there was yet another voice; the minor trades had also armed in self-defence; they dreaded the advent of a sort of Venetian aristocracy and sensibly felt how much their own strength would be diminished by the proposed amputation. Both parties met; one prepared and united, the other loose and unregulated; the latter advanced in disorder and was repulsed: yet so general was the fear of a Venetian government at this moment that both extremes of society, the nobles and democracy, now began to draw closer together and a struggle would have ensued if external danger had not arrested it *.

Of the free companies which still tormented Italy, that of the "*Uncino*," then at Arezzo in great force, began to threaten Florence: this for a moment hushed the cries of faction, and Hawkwood after a few days of manœuvring and one sharp en-

* M. di C. Stefani, Lib. xi., Rub. 902, 904, 905.—Leon. Aretino, Lib. ix.—Macchiavelli, Lib. iii°.—Scip. Ammirato, Lib. xiv., p. 758.

counter repulsed the invaders; but during this lull the Balià, now increased to a hundred and eighty-four members, destroyed the existing scrutiny list and commenced a fresh one of a more limited and select character than that of the previous year in which we find the names of nearly five thousand citizens eligible to the highest offices of state *. A general amnesty for political crimes was at the same time published which included all those who had been declared rebels or exiles, or who had been disfranchised since 1378; and a decree passed authorising one-third of the priors and consequently every inferior office to be drawn from minor trades but the gonfalonier of justice from the major arts alone †.

Affairs were still unsettled: in February fresh disturbances caused by the old nobility and newly returned exiles produced another Balià, more reforms, more rebels, and more exiles: amongst the latter, to the shame of his country, Michele di Lando now fell a sacrifice in despite of his services, a victim of popular malice or aristocratic jealousy; the noble Popolani could never pardon even the virtues of a plebeian, although exerted in their own defence, and condemned him to banishment.

Only a short time elapsed ere a fresh tumult was prevented merely by the rank and personal character of Rinaldo Gianfiglazzi one of the recently dubbed knights who just then became gonfalonier, for many, both nobles and citizens, were weary of mob government and hailed the advent of a man of rank and good reputation to the chief magistracy of the commonwealth. It was not long however before another sedition of the Ciompi followed with such boldness and success as not only to force their grievances on the consideration of a new parliament but even against the opinion of the Seignory to command their redress. This yielding only augmented the Ciompi's

* M. di C. Stefani, Lib. xi., Rub. 907, and Monumento, N°. 2, per la Rubrica, 906.

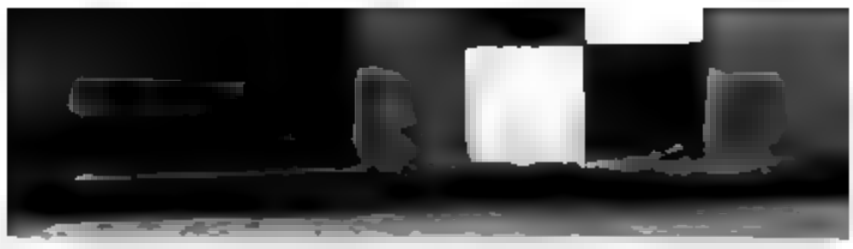
† Stefani, Lib. xi., Rub. 906.—Giovan. Cambi, Storia, vol. xx.—Delizie degli Eruditi Toscani, p. 127.

audacity; their increased demands were now met with greater vigour by the moral resolution of government backed by an armed force which awed the insurgents into present submission while it gained time for a new Balià of eighty-two citizens to cancel every act passed by the late parliament in their favour. Once more aroused, the Ciompi again broke forth, but were as speedily quelled by the vigour of a determined administration, within and without beset by enemies, and who with an indignant spirit were constrained to pay fresh contributions to the companies of Saint George and the "Rampino" which still infested the frontier and proved too powerful for Hawkwood *.

Quiet was scarcely restored when an embassy from Charles of Durazzo, who had conquered and murdered Giovanna, came to offer Arezzo for sale provided that Florence would join him; but this temptation was stifled by the intelligence that Louis of Anjou was already on his march with a large force to dispute the crown of Naples as the adopted son of that queen. A pause thus occurred, during which internal disorders fully occupied the people while some trifling acquisitions of territory by the submission of a variety of feudal chieftains were continually augmenting and rounding the republican dominions. The arrival of Louis in Italy again drew their attention to Neapolitan affairs and compelled them to steer cautiously between him and Carlo who were at that moment the Scylla and Charybdis of Italian politics: Charles was really the political favourite at Florence, wherefore Hawkwood was purposely dismissed and engaged by Urban VI. who conjointly satisfied his pecuniary demands; so that in this way she afforded indirect assistance to the King of Naples †.

* M. di C. Stefani, Lib. xi., Rub. 916 to 921.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xiv., p. 961.

† Cronica et Historia della Citta e Regno di Napoli, di Fra Luigi Vulcani, Lib. iii°, cap. iii°, p. 550, MS.—Costanzo, Ist. di Nap., vol. ii°, Lib. viii., p. 61.—M. di Coppo Stefani, Lib. xii., Rub. 941.—Storia di Goro Dati, p. 24.



Hawkwood's absence gave new hopes to the Ciompi who exasperated by their late failures determined to rise once more and spare no living creature in the fury of their revenge: a father however suspected his son's movements and had influence enough to gain his secret which straightway was revealed to government: then came a new Balià, that clumsy resemblance of the Roman dictators; but did little to remedy the evil for it was itself an epitome of the general confusion: the fault lay in a system inherently vicious and deceptive, and still more corrupt than vicious; a real aristocracy or oligarchy with the alluring name of republic could no longer deceive the sufferers: sedition in this instance was quelled, but public discontent remained unabated. The two great councils were again altered; that of the podestà was augmented to a hundred and two popolani of which sixty-four were from the minor trades and the addition of forty nobles: that of the "Capitano del Popolo" including the consuls of trades, consisted of two hundred and eighty-five popolani, ninety-six of whom were taken from the minor arts; so that between four and five hundred deputies now represented the republic *.

In addition to the miserable consequences of man's crimes Nature herself sent new calamities to Florence: sudden and repeated floods overflowed a great part of A.D. 1383. the city and surrounding country, conflagrations followed as they were wont, and a wide-spreading pestilence finished the account: population began to dwindle away, for multitudes fled from this combination of moral and physical calamity, revenues diminished, imposts increased, citizens were forbidden but in vain to leave the city without a pass; and finally a sharp tax was imposed on all that infringed this law, a tax which the rich evaded and the poor were compelled to pay. Besides this the exiles menaced Florence; troops were drawn from the Casentino to garrison it and there was universal vacillation, when in

* S. Ammirato, Lib. xiv., p. 764.

the midst of all sprang up another tumult of the Ciompi to complete the general disorder *. Thus for a whole year was Florence languishing under the influence of natural misfortunes, or working in suppressed or open ferment; and all for power, office, and selfish acquisitions. To acquire these, no conscientious scruples, no ties of companionship, no social duty were obstacles; and to accomplish this says Stefani were invented the Admonition, the Divieto, the Sedere †, and other dishonest artifices for disfranchising and persecuting citizens. Perhaps hardly one in a hundred was successful, and even then what were his gains? Envy, hatred, jealousy, vengeance, and danger; a fleeting power, and almost inevitable disgrace! The political effects of these last four years were to lessen the strength and reputation of Florence in the eyes of foreigners and the opinion of Italy; and though still powerful these dissensions exposed her to the insolent rapacity of every condottiere that chose to cross her borders ‡.

Louis Duke of Anjou had already reached the kingdom of Naples and rendered its possessor uneasy: he was followed in 1384 by the Sieur de Coucy an officer of great reputation, who marching by Lucca and Siena with some damage to Florence, gained possession of Arezzo which was then occupied by one of Durazzo's lieutenants; but a report of Anjou's death and an ineffectual attack on the citadel prevented his immediate advance §. The fate of this city alarmed Florence, more especially as Anjou was enraged at Hawkwood's dismissal the motives for which he saw through, and had already requested the French king to make reprisals on Florentine property. This produced a new league of the Tuscan states but his death in October relieved them from apprehen-

A.D. 1384.

* M. di C. Stefani, Lib. xii., Rub. 954, 955, 956.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xiv., p. 764.

† The Sedere was suspension for a time from office, and hereafter will be more fully explained.

‡ Stefani, Lib. xi., Rub. 923.

§ Ibid., Lib. xii., Rub. 933, 961, 962.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xv., p. 768.

sion and emboldened Florence rather to lay siege to Arezzo at once than be kept in continual alarm by the troops that held it.

On this occasion the republic displayed its natural strength and admirable military organisation for defensive and even offensive war in its own immediate neighbourhood. De Coucy was willing to sell Arezzo, but to save his own honour wished to be apparently compelled to do so by a great display of military force, and in three days Florence had an army of sixty thousand foot and twenty thousand horse encamped about the place! Some of these were regular troops, but the greater part militia from the contado and district which were so skilfully organised that one day was sufficient to prepare them and two more to assemble the whole mass in arms on any given point. Each district sent its contingent under a regular gradation of official rank; such as captains of tens, of hundreds, and of thousands, so that one hundred thousand militia could be at any time assembled and almost all being rural labourers were in those unquiet times, well acquainted with the use of arms as irregular troops, and admirably adapted to defend the strong mountain passes of their country, as will hereafter be noticed.

During their period of service government not only supplied them with provisions, but also with daily pay equal to the current price of manual labour, but when this organisation first took place does not appear, probably about the present period as with such a force and its power of rapid concentration there could be no necessity for that continual bribing of the condottieri which so strongly marked the foregone times: it may be that this establishment had been allowed to fall into disuse but on this occasion was revived, and that Goro Dati, gives us these particulars with his usual enthusiasm about everything Florentine, in all the brilliancy of theoretical perfection *.

* Goro Dati, Istoria di Firenzi, pp. 26 and 37.

The siege of Arezzo was pushed on with some vigour and the bargain concluded, by which 40,000, or according to others 100,000 florins were to be given for that city, the citadel being purchased at the same time from Durazzo's lieutenant for the amount of wages due to him and his soldiers: so that including every expense this acquisition is admitted to have cost the republic 200,000 florins *.

Thus on the twentieth of November 1384 Florence for the second time became mistress of Arezzo after forty-one years' exclusion; while the latter after an equal period of troubles and suffering under the ever-varying blast of political tempests, was rejoiced to find herself once more in the comparatively quiet haven of regular government alike free from the rapacity of foreigners and the ambition of her own turbulent citizens. The still potent Tarlati who had opposed this transfer were soon besieged in their castles and reduced along with every other dependence of Arezzo to Florentine subjection: there were great public rejoicings on this important event, for Arezzo once the rival and even more powerful than Florence had ever been the rendezvous of her enemies, the source of plots, machinations, and vexatious inroads. All the public and private splendour of the community was exhibited at these festivals, but no citizen could vie in magnificence with Benedetto Alberti whose brilliant entertainments were more like those of a sovereign prince than a simple gentleman, and served not a little to augment the jealousy and hatred of his enemies †.

This was succeeded by a new and more liberal re-filling of the election purses, called the "*Union Scrutiny*" because it admitted all to the priorate who had ever before enjoyed that dignity whether admonished or Ghibeline, and the periodical renewal was ordered to be every four years ‡.

A.D. 1385.

* M. di C. Stefani, Lib. xii., Rub. 963, 965. We here take leave of this cotemporary author. — Leon. Aretino, Lib. ix., folio 177.— S. Ammirato, Lib. xv., p. 769.

† Macchiavelli, Lib. iii°.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xv., p. 770.

‡ Ammirato, Lib. xv., p. 772.

Ten condottieri at the least and all their rough companions now continued those ravages to which Italy had been exposed for forty years without cessation pity or remorse! Lord and vassal, principality or republic were alike to them if weak enough to be plundered with impunity; their vast increase now made it expedient for Bologna, Florence, and even Gian-Galeazzo Visconte, potent as he was, to unite against them on one side, while Florence, Bologna, Siena, Pisa, Lucca, and Perugia formed a defensive league on the other *.

The intelligence of Charles of Durazzo's return to Hungary and subsequent accession to that throne was gladly received at Florence as a pledge of Neapolitan tranquillity, for as a purely commercial state peace was ever her object abroad whatever might be the intensity of her troubles at home; but messengers followed in February with an account of his assassination, and considerably depressed the public mind by placing the destiny of Naples again in jeopardy. She now exerted her influence with both Urban and France in favour of Durazzo's son the young king Ladislaus who with his own sister Giovanna, both infants, remained at Naples under the guardianship of their mother Queen Margaret while she with a feeble hand endeavoured to hold out against Otho of Brunswick and the Anjou faction. But Urban had quarrelled with and excommunicated Charles, and deaf to all entreaties either from his widow or any other quarter, entertained the design of conquering Naples for the church: nor were they more successful with France in effecting a marriage between the young Duke of Anjou and Princess Giovanna to unite the opposing interests; so that peace was yet far from Italy and internal danger again beset the Florentines †.

A.D. 1386.

A.D. 1387.

Benedetto degli Alberti had been too active in humbling the

* Ammirato, Lib. xv., p. 772, 775.

† Muratori, Anno 1386, 1387.—Memorie Storiche di Ser Naddo, vol. xviii. —Delizie degli Eruditi Toscani, p. 87.

Guelphic party and noble popolani to escape malice; his magnificence and popularity at the late festival augmented their jealousy as it probably tempted their rapacity, for though his power was great their hatred exceeded it, and he was marked for a victim. It happened that in the same Seignory Alberti and his son-in-law Filippo Magalotti were drawn for office, the latter as gonfalonier of justice the former as gonfalonier of a company: this alarmed his enemies; the union of two such offices in one family was considered dangerous; not to the state, but to faction. Filippo's kinsman and enemy Beso Magalotti, undertook to prove his ineligibility and demand his dismission as being under age but through Benedetto's influence he was received by the Seignory as gonfalonier elect*. Filippo was one of those knights created by the Ciompi, and though young enjoyed a high reputation for wisdom and talent so that when his reception became known his opponents were astounded, they suddenly armed, and sternly demanded his rejection with the alternative of tumult and general disorder. The Seignory through error or intimidation, but more probably both, at once acquiesced; his name was accordingly replaced in the purse and that of Bardo Mancini a deadly foe of all the Alberti drawn in its place: thus supported, the whole family of Alberti was denounced by their opponents, every past act was dragged forward as a present crime and even their houses and property were threatened with instant conflagration. This poison worked, armed men began to congregate, (for the rich, in self-defence, had guards of foreign soldiers in their houses) and another civil contest was every moment expected. On the first of May the new Seignory entered office and created a Balià of eighty citizens whose first resolution decreed that no man under twenty-five years old should fill any office either within or without the city, and that none under thirty could thenceforth be

* Memorie Storiche di Ser Naddo, in vol. xviii., Delizie degli Eruditi Toscani, p. 92.

gonfalonier of justice. Seeing this Benedetto asked permission, on account of age and long service, to be excused from public duties and was answered that both he and his kinsman Cipriano were not only relieved from service but as a further favour were forbidden to enter any of the three palaces under penalty of 1000 florins. This sarcastic answer was followed up next morning by a Divieto to nearly all the family for five years, so that Benedetto thought it better at once to withdraw and immediately asked leave of absence on private business, leaving its duration to the Balià. Two years of exile under this title were named, Benedetto was ordered to depart within eight days, and in eighteen to be at least a hundred miles from Florence; he was moreover forbidden to remain in Lombardy, and finally commanded to report his progress every fortnight *.

Alberti retired with all the calmness of a man conscious of self-integrity and his enemies' injustice. "You see" said he to his sorrowing friends "how fortune has ruined me and "menaced you, and yet none of us should marvel, for so it "happens to all those who amongst a multitude of the wicked "would strive to act with integrity and endeavour to support "that which the many are trying to destroy." After some further discourse he departed, made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and died at Rhodes on his homeward journey; but his remains were brought to Florence and, as often happens, interred with public honours by the very persons who had most persecuted him when living. Allowing for the notions and character of his age and country, Benedetto Alberto seems to have been an honest patriot; for even at the moment of his exile a single sign would have drawn many a sword from its scabbard in his cause: according to native customs he had followed trade from his youth and accumulated both riches and an honest reputation; he is described as a man of strong natural sense, con-

* Mem. Storiche di Ser Naddo, p. 94.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xv., p. 781.

versant beyond all cotemporaries in public business, and more devoted to his country's good than any other citizen of that day: the Capitani's tyranny disgusted him and he sided against them: offended with the adverse party for their no less tyrannical exercise of power, he quitted them in turn and was partly the ruin of both, but more feared on this account by the third and finally paramount faction, who although he belonged to the class of noble popolani at last destroyed him. He was, says Ammirato, modest in dress, pleasing and cheerful in society, and generous of his means, with which he often administered most liberally to the wants of that country so disgraced by his persecution *.

More admonitions, exiles, and disfranchisements, followed Alberto's banishment, and still the faction remained unsated; another prior was wrested from the minor arts and never afterwards restored; exile upon exile were yet loudly demanded, and the clash of arms gave vigour to the call: but the Balià had done enough, even Mancini softened, and being prepared for resistance refused all compromise. Faction was for a moment abashed; the election purses were still further augmented, but by children so young that twenty years were requisite to render them eligible. What caused most scandal was the formation of a new purse, afterwards called in derision the *Borsellino* or little pet purse, which being filled with the names of chosen adherents furnished two stanch votes in every public deliberation of the Seignory; hence all the priors of that faction were nick-named "*Priors of the Borsellino.*" It even became a proverb, and any selected nice thing was afterwards said in common parlance to be of the "*Borsellino*" †. After taking this favourable occasion to reduce the right of the plebeian party to a fourth instead of a third part of the government, which was submitted to without a struggle, the

* S. Ammirato, Lib. xv., p. 783.
† Giov. Cambi, Storia, p. 128, vol. xx., Delizie, &c^a.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xv., p. 784.

Balià dissolved itself and the ordinary authorities resumed their usual functions.

War in any shape or place was always more or less injurious to Florentine commerce, wherefore we constantly find that nation however fierce at home, striving in the amiable character of peace-makers to restore Italian tranquillity even in the most distant states and between the bitterest of their enemies. At this period their endeavours were strenuously exerted to pacify Lombardy, especially Venice and Padua who were tearing each other to pieces as a future repast for Milan; and also in aiding Bologna against the condottieri whom no ties could bind, no contributions secure; but particularly in watching the fierce and restless Urban whose efforts to recover what had fallen away from the church coupled with that church's schism, and his own designs on Naples, were all interrupting public tranquillity. Their attention was now however most engaged by the growing ambition and rapid conquests of Gian Galeazzo to which the waning friendship of Siena and her increasing intimacy with Milan gave a more alarming character; nor could all the soft language or deceptive arts of Visconte lull their well-grounded suspicions *. A.D. 1388.

Military preparations therefore became expedient, and though still low in revenue and averse to expenditure Vieri Cavicciuli was despatched on an embassy to John Belcott or Beltot, the leader of an English company, (for these robbers were treated like princes) to engage him in the Florentine service. Being arrived at Perugia where Urban then resided, this ambassador was ordered to court, and refusing to divulge his mission had his papers seized and examined while he himself was committed to prison; after which the pontiff dismissed him with insult. The pope's being allowed to enter Perugia against the earnest remonstrances and warnings of Florence had already given great uneasiness; and thus tamely suffering the violation of

* S. Ammirato, Lib. xv., p. 789.

international law within her own jurisdiction was a proof of lost independence with which Florence failed not to reproach her. There was however no redress against Urban, and the incursions of condottieri, who laughed at all compacts, prevented ulterior proceedings, for so little shame did this robber life now inspire that even Pandolfo Malatesta of Rimini a man in the first rank of Italian princes, thought it no disgrace to lead a small band of miscreants to the plunder of his native country. The increasing discontent of Siena also kept Florence on the alert: after a long and close alliance she had become, perhaps justly jealous of the latter, especially since the acquisition of Arezzo which had involved them in disputes about Lucignana one of its dependant towns claimed by Siena; and also at Cortona's falling off from its ancient alliance and choosing Florentine protection. While in this state of excitement Montepulciano after many years of submission now pretended to its liberty by virtue of former treaties; Siena denied this, and the dispute was referred to Florence who under certain conditions gave judgment in favour of the latter. She however refused to abide by the decision and continued vexing Montepulciano which losing all patience at last revolted and offered itself to Florence by whom Siena believed the whole business to have been covertly managed. This offer was long and variously debated and by many altogether refused; but during these discussions the ambassadors of Montepulciano being determined to carry their point, inserted that city's name in the great register of the commonwealth, which made the act irrevocable except by a general parliament. Thirty lances were sent to protect the town, and Siena still disbelieving in Florentine sincerity drew closer her ties of friendship with Visconte by offers of almost unlimited authority in order to break the pride and power of her rival *.

* O. Malavolti, Lib. ix., Part ii°, p. 163. — Leon. Aretino, Lib. ix. — S. Ammirato, Lib. xv., p. 791.

War was on the point of bursting when ambassadors from Milan arrived nominally as mediators but really with other designs, yet disclaiming any hostile intentions on Visconte's part towards the Florentine republic. The citizens were not deceived, but on the contrary made a new league with Bologna Ravenna Faenza and Imola, while their efforts for peace were renewed. Padua was now closely besieged by Venice in concert with Visconte who having conquered Verona was rapidly extending his power both by arms and money; half Venice was in his pay and even the gonfalonier of Florence received a bribe during the late negotiations there. Padua fell, and the Carrara princes dispersed or imprisoned, yet after some adversity were reserved for better fortune, but only to be again cast down and become a prey to Venetian aggrandisement*.

Florence perceiving the impossibility of convincing Siena of her sincerity advised Montepulciano to submit, and to remove one cause of jealousy recalled her troops while she engaged Piero Gambacorta and Bologna to reconcile these two cities: this was finally effected, but the Senese jealousy of Florence remained, and a subsequent reception of two hundred Milanese lances at Siena filled the former with alarm: the designs of Visconte were evident; his deceit palpable, and war almost inevitable: Naples was distracted; the pontiff detested Florence; the Venetians and Lombards followed Milan; Padua and Verona had fallen, and the Tuscan republics were disunited; so that Bologna was the only stay. Extraordinary circumstances needed extraordinary measures, and these two republics had recourse to France: this was perilous; foreign aid in domestic war is ever so; but the introduction of an ambitious, powerful and military nation into Italy, thus sanctioning as it were their interference in national quarrels, was particularly dangerous and the ultimate consequences of this example proved disastrous to Italian liberty. Two ambassadors pro-

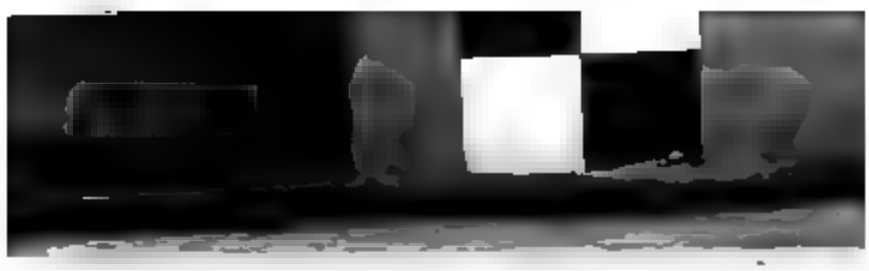
* Mem. Storiche di Ser Naddo, p. 104.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xv., r

ceeded to France by sea and two by land; the latter were arrested through Visconte's influence in the Genoese territory, and he thus became possessed of the secret*. Florence and Bologna offered by this treaty to acknowledge the right of France to all conquests that should be made from Visconte between the Po and Genoese shores: those made between Pavia and the Apennines, Pavia itself, Milan, and Como as far as the Count of Savoy's frontier were to be retained by him provided he joined the league; but if not, then to be at the disposal of France. The other states of Visconte, unless restored to the rightful lords or their descendants, were to be formed into republics. If France refused, permission was to be asked to treat with her vassals and to display the French standard in the combined armies†.

It is difficult to know which to admire most in this strange transaction, the rashness of Florence in wishing to substitute the tiger for the wolf and thus rivetting both ends of Italy with French shackles; or the folly of France in not being content with such an opening! Visconte aware of these machinations, angry at the friendly reception of the deposed fugitive Francesco da Carrara, who had arrived at Florence after numerous adventures; and displeased at Bernabò's son and Antonio della Scala being both favoured by that republic, drove all the Florentine and Bolognese merchants from his dominions; and Florence about the same period invited Stephen Duke of Bavaria an enemy of Visconte to invade Lombardy while she answered the Milanese decree by an assurance of safety to all Lombards who chose to trade in her dominions. To disperse the gathering storm Piero Gambacorta strenuously exerted himself, and in October 1389 a league for three years was signed at Pisa between that republic, Florence, Milan, Ferrara, Mantua, Rimini, Forli, Bologna, Perugia, Siena, Lucca, and other places of inferior note, for

A.D. 1389.

* Mem. Storiche di Ser Naddo, p. 113. † S. Ammirato, Lib. xv., p. 796.



mutual defence and assistance especially against the condottieri which was in fact the pivot of the confederacy. Visconte bound himself not to meddle with Bolognese or Tuscan affairs, those of Romagna, or of any part south of Modena: other conditions for the security of general peace which was Gambacorta's main object were added and so Italy appeared for the moment to be tranquillised*.

On the tenth of October 1389 Urban VI. died at Rome, not without suspicions of poison, and the cardinal of Naples succeeded him under the name of Boniface the Ninth. He was but thirty-four years old and had the character of being unlearned and not averse to simony, but otherwise amiable. The Florentines satisfied with his friendly disposition were so far relieved of one source of anxiety; but jealousy of Giovan Galeazzo augmented, and notwithstanding the late confederacy everything presaged inevitable war†. It was a gloomy period, and the age itself seemed marked for misfortune by the ungovernable passions of men. The apostolic see, saith Ammirato, was contaminated by schism; the true pope, stained with cruelty, strewed the Genoese shores with the bodies of murdered cardinals; the empire languishing under a despicable monarch who was afterwards justly dethroned; France long governed by a child, oppressed with intolerable burdens, ravaged by licentious armies, and the royal infants in danger from their aunt Valentina Visconte the curse of that kingdom. An aged queen the descendant of a Charles and a Robert, first dethroned and then strangled at Naples: her murderer and successor himself poniarded and then poisoned in Hungary, two queens, mother and daughter being accessory, of whom one was imprisoned and the other suffered death soon after‡.

* Ser Nuddo, p. 112.—Leon. Aretino, Lib. ix.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xv., p. 797.—Poggio Bracciolini, Lib. iii°, p. 62, &c°.

† S. Ammirato, Lib. xv., p. 799.—Muratori, Anno 1389.

‡ Muratori, Anno 1386.

In Castile yet reigned the progeny of Henry, the murderer of his fratricide brother Pedro who is said to have justly deserved the appellation of cruel: nor was it better in Aragon or Portugal, where two Pedros simultaneously ruled under the same odious character which they relieved by rapes, adulteries, and other horrible excesses unmitigated by a single virtue: a monarch in Navarre stained with every filthy crime that dishonours human nature: England unquiet; Scotland in trouble, and every member of the Christian republic tainted and infirm.

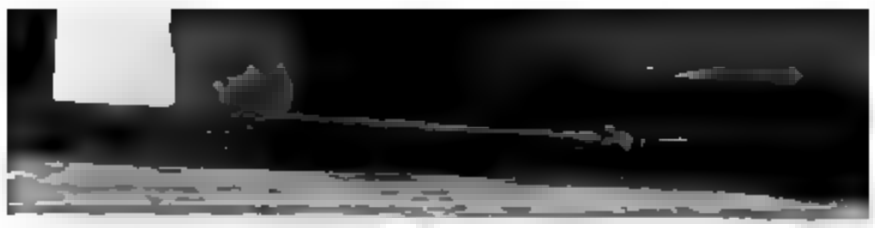
In such a state of the world is it wonderful that Florence also should have bowed under the blast of tempests so great and various? Whether from Capitani, Ciompi, or restored exiles, she found no repose; and if we look at her Italian neighbours, what one of them was sound? At Milan a hypocritical nephew dethrones and imprisons his uncle and then poisons him; he afterwards kills his own sister to stop her importunity for the life of a husband whom he also murders. Again at Forlì the good Senibaldi degli Ordilaffi is similarly treated by a kinsman as nearly related: the Count of San Severino the same: cruel wars between two intimate friends, the lords of Verona and Padua; the former a fratricide and of a fratricidal house, and both despoiled and exiled by the viper of Milan *. Bloody revolutions at Ferrara, and no less bloody retribution: the Prefect of Rome murdered by his own subjects at Viterbo: Count Orsino driven from his dominion of Narni by a priestly cousin and cardinal: the general conversion of the powers of literature and military virtue into instruments of deceit and plunder: the noble arts buried: no hopes of coming good, and dismal prospects of infinite misery †. Such was the character of that unhappy age, and the men that lived in it must be judged by it rather than by the standard of modern excellence.

* Muratori, Anno 1387. — Mariana Hist. de España, Lib. xvii., cap. xiii.; and Lib. xviii., cap. xi.

† Scip. Ammirato, Lib. xv., pp. 783, 790.

The genuine forms of vice and virtue are now more clearly defined, more generally acknowledged, and certainly better appreciated; we are startled at great crimes, yet fill up the measure with our small ones; for these fall lightly like snow-flakes, unregarded and almost unperceived. Our great security against great crimes, is that comparatively well-balanced state of society where power and temptation are both removed from the daring and ambitious. Destroy this, and men's passions will again burst forth with all the reckless fury of our ancestors.

CONTEMPORARY MONARCHS.—England: Richard II.—Scotland: Robert II.—France: Charles V. (The Wise), to 1380; then Charles VI. (The Maniac).—Aragon: Peter IV. until 1387; then John I.—Castile and Leon: Henry II. of Trastamare until 1379; then John I.—Portugal: Ferdinand until 1383; then John, (natural son of Peter I.), Regent to 1385; then John I.—Sicily: Maria and Martin of Aragon.—Naples: Joanna to 1382; then Charles of Durazzo until 1385; then his son Ladislaus.—Pope: Urban VI. until 1389; then Boniface IX.—Emperor of Germany: Wenceslas.—Hungary and Poland: Louis the Great to 1382; then Maria; and troubles in Hungary until 1385, when Charles of Durazzo succeeds, and is almost immediately murdered; troubles until 1387; then Sigismund of Luxemburg.—Poland: Hedwig, 1383; and Vladislas, of the House of Jagellos, 1386.—Greek Emperor: John Palæologus.—Ottoman Emperor: Murad I., or Amurath to 1389; then Bayezid, (or Bajazet); Timour the Tartar.



CHAPTER XXVIII.

FROM A.D. 1390 TO A.D. 1402.

TWELVE years of peace coupled with the general relief afforded by a reduction of both principal and interest of the national debt worked their usual effects on Florence, and in despite of domestic troubles she is described by cotemporary authors as at this period abounding in wealth and population, full of high spirit and ready for enterprise*.

A.D. 1390.

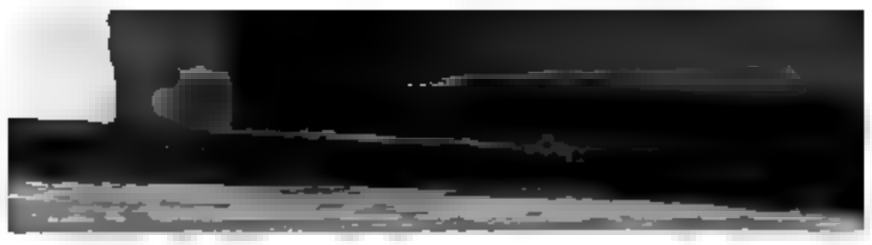
The many fearful and repeated tempests recorded by her writers seem only to have buffeted those greater ships that launched out into the storm and exposed themselves to its fury; the mass of vessels felt it as if in port, and though far from being uninfluenced, were yet beyond the reach of shipwreck and pursued their course in comparative safety. Commerce therefore and manufactures still held on their way whenever her foreign relations were not affected by external war, and even then the channels of communication were not entirely unnavigable. Florence was in fact a lake of commercial industry whose feeders when unimpeded were too numerous for its capacity and required an outlet for the riches they brought down: if therefore self-defence had not occupied her, Florence herself would have become as dangerous a neighbour as her own internal discord might have allowed, and by war or purchase have been mistress of Tuscany. Amidst the most tur-

* Leon. Aretino, Lib. x.—Poggio Bracciolini, Lib. iii°, p. 60.

bulent periods of domestic history multitudes of her citizens, either abroad or at home, were successfully trading in security, and weaving her web of commerce over half the world*. The reasons of this prosperity may be discoverable in the physical state of her territory, the superiority of Italian civilisation generally, and the active intelligence and restless nature of the Florentine people in particular. Pent up in a small, mountainous, and comparatively unfruitful district, Florence could rarely draw from its own territory sufficient subsistence for an increasing population in an air and climate considered particularly favourable to the multiplication of the human species: and though some harvests were sufficiently abundant for two years' consumption, the numerous famines and vast sums spent in importing foreign corn, as well as the powerful influence of Pisa over her supplies, all prove the general truth of the proposition†. This led to manufacturing industry, domestic trade, and foreign commerce; and Florentines like bees were seen in every field, following each other home laden with the riches of distant nations, and mingled with such a mass of political and statistical knowledge as proved at all times of infinite use to their country.

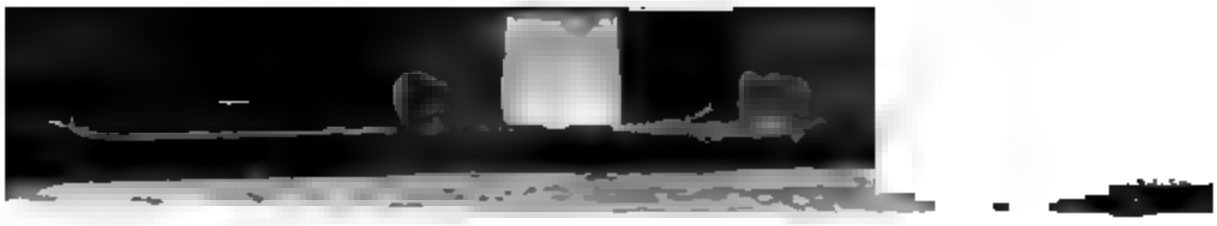
The war about to be described was the greatest enterprise ever undertaken by Florence, and which including the armed truces may almost be said to have lasted twelve years against an able powerful sovereign whose dominions approached nearer to a rich and potent kingdom than a mere principality. Roused by a clear perception of coming events, the result as well of their natural sagacity as an intimate acquaintance with foreign policy character and resources, this band of traders with a civic population of perhaps ninety thousand souls placed in the centre of northern Italy, boldly stepped forward as the safeguard of general liberty; they stood like a rock, braved the coming storm, and finally saw the waves break

* Cronica di Buonaccorso Pitti, *passim*. † Goro Dati, Storia, p. 42.



down in ripples at their feet. Florence thus acted when almost every other state either shrank from the encounter or was blind to the consequences: that she through this spirited conduct preserved Italian liberty is a fact asserted by all her historians, and the events of that period tend to confirm the tale. It is for the tactician alone to pursue the varied course of military actions through all its windings; as a matter of common history the leading march and features of the conflict with their bearing on national character are sufficient; for it is the high political and moral consequences, the causes and effects of war, that belong to the general historian, not its details.

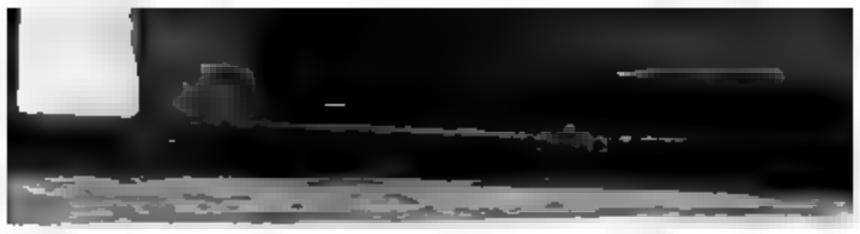
The objects of Florence in her contest with Gian-Galeazzo Visconte were the preservation of her own and Italian liberty, both in danger from his ambition: her views were broad and determined; her means concentrated but powerful and elastic beyond conception; like the tiger's claw, soft and harmless when at rest, but capable of sudden quick and fearful extension when roused from its repose. The annihilation of Visconte was her fixed resolve, and to carry this she scrupled not to stir up both France and Germany in her cause; from these two states she simultaneously drew forth their warlike legions and in one united surge attempted to overwhelm the dreaded tyrant of Lombardy. Had her allies been more faithful on one side, and more temperate on the other, her policy according to all human calculation would have succeeded: by Hawkwood's advice a powerful French army was to descend from the mountains but attempt nothing until it united with his forces under the walls of Milan while a similar cloud from the German Alps spread over the eastern frontier and hastened on the storm. Had all held true to calculation, above thirty thousand horse besides a numerous infantry would have overpowered Milan and crushed the Visconti; but war and chance are synonymous and the event was different, luckily



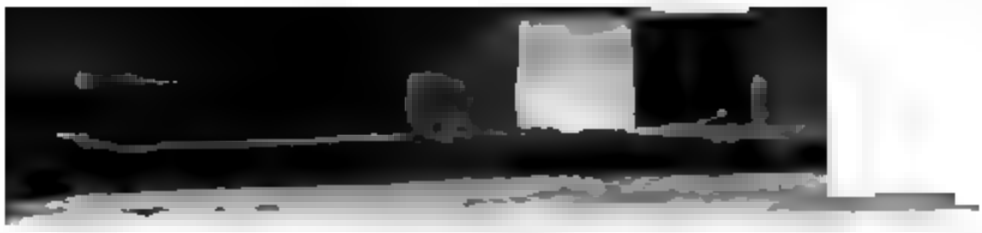
perhaps, for the very liberty it was meant to preserve; for what could Florence, what could Italy have achieved against the fierce ambition of a double French dynasty at each extremity of her disordered and disunited peninsula? A.D. 1390.

It is now time to narrate as briefly as possible the transactions in Lombardy that led to this important war, and then its principal details along with the more brilliant exploits of the belligerents.—Galeazzo Visconte died in 1378 and was succeeded by his son Giovanni or Gian-Galeazzo Count of Vertù in France: the uncle and nephew therefore became co-equal seignors of Lombardy and almost of necessity fearful and jealous of each other, for they were both Visconti. Gian-Galeazzo either affecting to be, or really alarmed for his personal safety in consequence of the envy of Bernabò and his numerous progeny (which at one time amounted to thirty-six children legitimate and illegitimate, with the promise of eighteen more from various sources) avoided Milan and settled himself at Pavia where affecting an utter contempt for all mundane pleasures he dressed in humble attire, fed simply and sparingly, sought the converse of holy men, quoted his uncle, whom he called father, on all occasions, and in their conjoint affairs left everything with reverence to his superior judgment. For seven long years did he thus remain buried in the depths of worldly simulation and hypocritical deceit, but never moving without an armed retinue and exhibiting every symptom of timidity and even cowardice: this even excited the ridicule of his kinsmen who with the worldly-minded and ambitious, regarded him as a poor-spirited creature unworthy of the princely dignity, but by the devout he was esteemed as a saint.

To secure his life he married Bernabò's daughter, the more willingly bestowed upon him, according to some writers, because she was chosen as the surest instrument of his destruction, yet she disappointed all expectations by revealing every attempt to her husband. Thus finding or feigning that



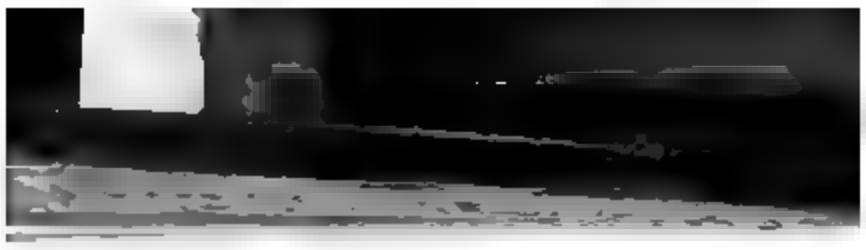
his life was insecure; for the fact though probable remains unproved; he resolved to bring the event to a crisis and by one bold movement simultaneously throw off the mask and seize the states of Lombardy. He accordingly published his intention of visiting the shrine of La Madonna di Varese which would lead him under the walls of Milan and a letter was written to Bernabò with an excuse for his not entering the town although anxious to embrace so near and dear a kinsman, therefore prayed for an interview without the gates. Leaving Pavia with about fifteen hundred well-armed but disguised horsemen he slept the same night at Binasco and the next day was met by Bernabò's sons Lodovico and Ridolfo about two miles from Milan: thus attended he proceeded to the Hospital of Saint Ambrogio outside the Vercellina gate where Bernabo, mounted on a mule, with a slender retinue attended him. Galeazzo's immediate followers crowned with olives and disguised in festive attire instantly curled round the smaller group in playful triumph, but the scene soon changed; for one of them wrenching off the bridle of Bernabò's mule exclaimed, "*Messere you are prisoner to the Count of Vertù.*" "*Why my son,*" said Bernabò, turning in agitation to Galeazzo, "*Why have you done this? I love you; what I have is yours, do not betray your own blood!*" "*It needs must be,*" returned Galeazzo, "*because at divers seasons you have plotted against my life.*" During this short interval a numerous reenforcement came up and secured all the prisoners except one of Bernabò's sons who escaped in the confusion: the rest entered Milan by the Zobbia gate, which belonged to Galeazzo, amidst the shouting of a joyful multitude who saluted him with loud cries of "*Long live the Count and down with tolls and taxes.*"—No man held up a hand for the two prisoners: their dwellings were instantly delivered over to the multitude and many grinding imposts were instantly abolished by proclamation. Thus quiet possession of Milan was at once obtained; all the strongholds sur-



rendered on the following morning, and a treasure of 1,700,000 florins with six cart-loads of wrought silver besides other precious furniture fell quietly into Gian-Galeazzo's hands. The citizens rejoiced, for Bernabò was a tyrant of the most odious and disgusting class; one who if he occasionally dealt out a sort of poetical justice did it from whim, or impulse and ever with the hand of cruelty, and soul of despotism. Gian-Galeazzo at least knew men and how to govern them; he was well acquainted with the public feeling and general disgust at the fierce brutality and extortion of his uncle, and like all usurpers sought by just administration to support an unjust title. Taxes and gate-tolls were universally diminished, the people listened to, abuses removed, and laws justly administered: in the city of Reggio the monthly impost of 1200 florins was reduced to four, and others in proportion; so that the places recently governed by Bernabò seemed, says a cotemporary writer, to have been just delivered from hell and placed in paradiso*. Amongst the especial grievances of Milan was the plague of dogs which Bernabo let loose on its inhabitants: to gratify his passion for the chase every man according to his means was compelled to maintain one or more of these animals: officers were appointed for a monthly inspection of them in separate parks according to their various breeds and woe to him whose charge was not in good condition. So fearful were the people of this periodical scrutiny that the poorer sort procured the finest wheaten bread for these unconscious creatures while they themselves supported a wretched existence on the coarsest food and trembled at every muster. As there were forty thousand hearths or families at this time in Milan each supporting at least one dog and many a greater number, the burden of canine population became intolerable and the relief co-equal†.

* Gazata, Chronicle Apud Muratori, 1385.

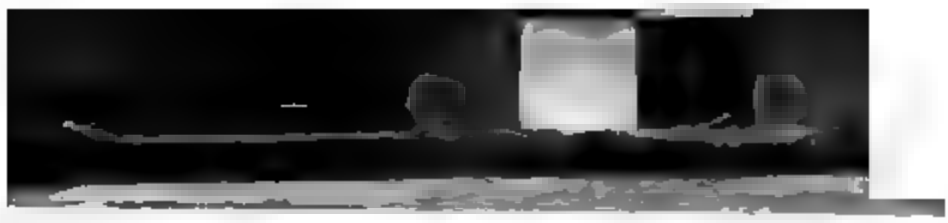
† Goro Dati, Stor. Fior., p. x. — Ser Naddo, Mem. Stor. p. 77. — Poggio, Stor. Fior., Lib. iii°, p. 60. — Corio., Stor. Milan, Parte iii^a, folio 257. — Muratori, Anno 1385. — Cagnola, Storia di Milano, p. 20. — We have here an evil



Under such auspices Bernabò's subjects gladly acknowledged the dominion of Galeazzo, and within six months both father and son were poisoned by his command. But another more amiable and innocent victim was first sacrificed: this was his own sister Violante the widow of Lionel Duke of Clarence and the Marquis of Monferrato, a lady of extreme beauty and excellence afterwards married to Lodovico the imprisoned son of Bernabò: her only crime was unceasing prayers, tears, and petitions for her husband's liberty, until the implacable Galeazzo got rid of these importunities by a fatal dose of poison!

Danger being so far removed and all the ancient domains of his family reunited, Visconte cast about for new acquisitions and resolved to extend his dominion to the Adriatic by conquering Verona and Padua. Open aggression was deemed impolitic, art more certain, and he therefore contrived to foment an already existing quarrel which had recently burst into open war between old Francesco da Carrara and Antonio della Scala hitherto on the most intimate terms of friendship with each other. Pope Urban VI. about this time gave the rich and powerful patriarchate of Aquileja in commendam to Cardinal Philip d' Alençon of France with which act the citizens of Udine, the capital, were outrageous; taking it as

presented to the eye in one concentrated mass, and are disgusted. But, except the tyranny and moral effect of its direct pecuniary action, it could have only slightly injured many of the richer classes. Not so the poor, amongst whom we may divine the extent of suffering from their stinting themselves and children to pamper these favourites; for what the dog eats of human sustenance man is in some way deprived. Yet Bernabò only centralised the wide-spread taste of our own age and country: it is often painful to see quantities of the finest food wantonly cast to the dogs under a rich man's table, and at the very moment when numbers of his poorest neighbours are struggling to support even a wretched existence. No dislike of dogs or disbelief in the rich man's humanity dictates this note, but a wish to exhibit the similarity of results between a concentrated tyrannical oppression and the more scattered inconsiderate acts of luxury. I have heard of a lady who fed her lap-dog on cream and Naples biscuits! yet there are always fragments enough in almost every family above want, to feed dogs when dogs are necessary amusing or useful; the over feeding them with superior viands is a mischievous abuse.

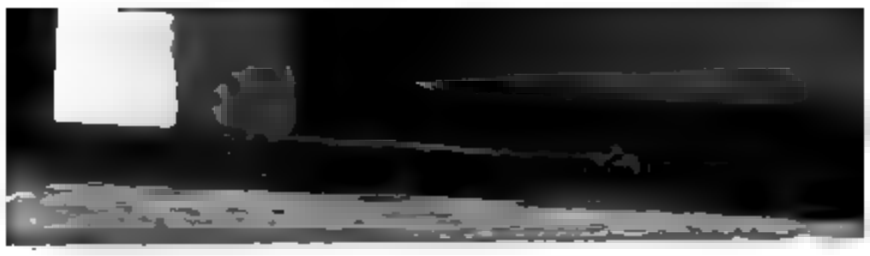


an insult that their ancient patriarchate should be dealt with as a petty benefice and exposed to the rapacity of covetous priests without any regard to public welfare. Under these feelings d' Alençon was refused admittance, and the example of Udine was generally followed throughout the state. Alençon had recourse to Francesco da Carrara whose dominions joined and expecting to gain something in the squabble cheerfully promised his assistance. The Venetians ever jealous of Carrara's movements gave secret aid to Udine and simultaneously induced Antonio della Scala by large subsidies to succour that city: proud of this alliance Antonio assembled troops and demanded a free passage for them through the Paduan dominions; this was of course refused, it became a source of dissension and a bitter war broke out between these lords in 1385. Gian-Galeazzo looked quietly on, watching his opportunity and secretly assisting both parties until Verona was nearly exhausted: he then joined Padua and made himself master of the former state by the treacherous breach of a treaty with the latter; this he believed would exasperate Francesco so much as to occasion war and the ultimate conquest of his dominions also *.

Nor was the Count of Vertù less anxious than his father to draw closer his ties of kindred with France and therefore gave his only daughter Valentina in marriage to the king's brother Louis Duke of Turenne and Count of Valois, with Asti, various towns of Piedmont, and other wealth as her portion; a marriage that requires some notice as it occasioned, or at least hastened the downfall of Florence and ultimate subjugation of Italy †.

Francesco da Carrara smarting under the feeling of being so duped by Visconte published a violent manifesto against him, and the latter immediately uniting with Venice and other states laid siege to his capital; but unpopular with the people old

* Poggio, Storia, Lib. iii°, p. 61.—Muratori, Anno 1385. † Muratori, 1387.



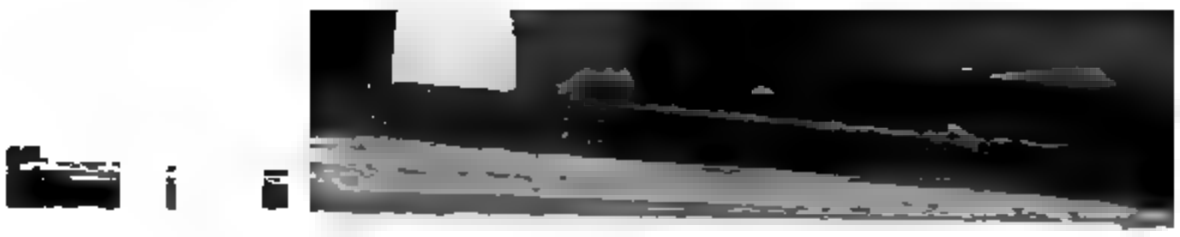
Francesco abdicated the lordship of Padua in favour of his son Francesco Novello as he was then called, and retired to Treves; yet nothing could withstand Visconte: tumults occurred in Treves and Padua, and both became his own ere the end of 1388 when the Carrara like the Scala family were driven into exile and imprisonment *.

These rapid accessions of power alarmed all Italy, for the dominions of Visconte extended from Ceneda, Belluno, and Feltre, on the confines of the patriarchate, to Asti in the west: he was still young, full of talents, of immeasurable ambition and profound deceit. A son and heir lately born afforded an opportunity of exercising this last quality by requesting the Florentine republic to be its sponsor, an act at that time considered as tantamount to perpetual amity, peace, and intimate union of all the parties †.

The quarrel between Florence and Siena has already been mentioned: the Senese still believed, and according to Corio and Malavolti with good reason, that the Florentines elated by having acquired Arezzo began to extend their views of aggrandisement over Tuscany and even beyond, and therefore drew closer to Gian-Galeazzo who saw in this breach a goodly opening for his own ambition. He had in contravention of the treaty of Pisa interfered in Tuscan politics; he had acquired by his intrigues a sovereign influence if not authority over Siena and Perugia, and had seduced many other Tuscan powers to his standard. The Florentines convinced of his duplicity assembled a great council of "Richiesti" where Giovanni de' Ricci a citizen of high repute publicly exposed Galeazzo's long-continued hypocrisy, his usurpation, his murders, his treachery in the conquests of Verona and Padua, and that insatiable appetite for power which seemed to increase with his increasing dominions; and now, having no more Lombard neighbours whom he deemed it expedient to conquer, he turned

* Muratori, 1388. † Poggio, Lib. iii., p. 62.

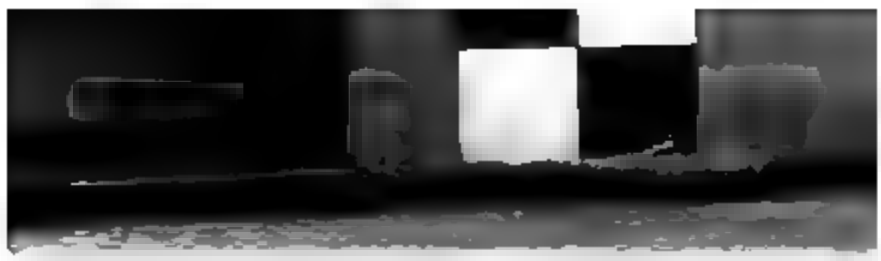
his eyes on the volatile Senese as convenient instruments of his ambition. "What," continued Ricci, "has he to do in "Tuscany? To defend Siena, which has received no wrong, "against his confederated allies? Neither he nor the Senese "have endured the slightest injury from us. An unbounded "thirst of dominion destroys his reason; he holds to no "compact, or law, or oath, or promise, provided he can only "augment his territory and acquire by force that which is "denied to reason. If you value liberty I implore you to "consider the arts and cunning which up to this moment he "he has made use of to take us unawares. He first inflamed "the mind of Siena and nourished her dissatisfaction with "large promises of military aid and various other temptations "if she would only declare war against you; he made a treaty "in which this was the governing condition, and then to lull "our suspicions offered his services to effect that reconciliation "of which he knew we were so desirous; but sent ambassadors "who instead of peace sowed seeds of war and persuaded the "Senese to give themselves over to his dominion. And when "you remonstrated against this treachery he denied with his "usual earnestness the truth of such reports which as he "asserted, were only propagated to injure him, for even if the "Senese had offered him the lordship of their republic he "never would have accepted it! Yet this was scarcely uttered "when six hundred cavalry were already on their march to "protect a people whom no one was offending, and therefore "only proved how determined he was to carry his own am-"bitious designs into execution! When through the exertions "of Gambacorta peace was afterwards made at Pisa and con-"firmed with the most sacred oaths, you know how well he "kept them by despatching Giovanni Ubaldini with a thousand "horse to seduce our ancient allies the Perugians, and with "deceitful promises persuade them to join his standard: and "even after this, were not his troops continually harassing



"Montepulciano from the Senese frontier while he kept un-
"blushingly asserting that these things were done entirely
"against his inclination? All this proves, O most prudent
"citizens, that neither his councils nor protestations can be
"regarded in any other light than to deceive, as you may
"daily observe; and why are we to remain any longer mere
"spectators? What other proof do we expect of that honesty
"which he, his letters, and his ambassadors, are entirely
"devoid of; seeing that deceit and secret treachery, not arms,
"are his most effective weapons? It is not only natural, but
"an amusing occupation for him to dupe everybody without
"any regard to previous promises, wherefore it becomes neces-
"sary to cut short all delay as utterly useless, and dismissing
"every expectation of peace oppose the designs of Visconte by
"preparing troops, money, and every other offensive and
"defensive material of war. We have genius, prudence,
"activity, and abundance of everything if you will only unite
"hand and heart in the glorious defence of our common
"country"*.

This speech decided the question and exasperated Gian-Galeazzo: a military board called the "*Ten of the Balìa*" was created to direct hostilities, war was unanimously voted, and Visconte's answer bitterly replied to by the Florentines: after which he sent a formal defiance and both sides prepared for the contest†. One division of the Florentine army under Luigi di Capua was immediately opposed to Giovanni degli Ubaldini the Milanese general at Siena; the other under Sir John Hawkwood marched to Bologna the advanced post of Florence on the side of Lombardy: her allies were Bologna, Cortona, Ravenna, Faenza, and Imola; the three last more to facilitate commerce than hostilities; but along with Bologna she bore almost the whole burden of the war. Galeazzo was

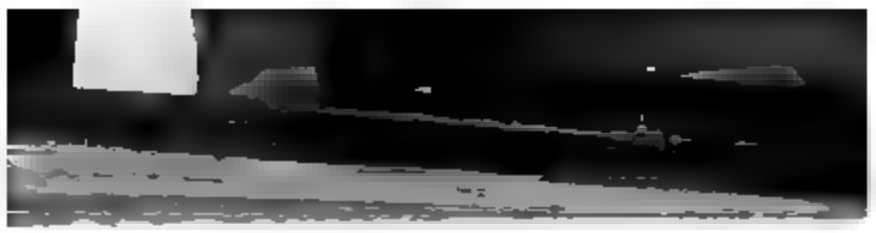
* Poggio, Lib. iii., p. 65.
† Leon. Aretino, Lib. ix. — Poggio, Lib. iii°, p. 68.—S. Ammirato, Lib. x., p. 800.



in league with Siena, Perugia, Rimini, Ferrara, Mantua, the Count of Poppi and many others; besides a secret intrigue commenced at Pisa when Gambacorta refused to break with the Florentines.

On hearing of Hawkwood's departure he ordered Ubaldini to begin operations: this immediately forced Montepulciano into the arms of Florence, and with her assistance incursions were made up to the very gates of Siena. Gian-Galeazzo with the exception of Hawkwood had enlisted almost all the ablest captains of the day; but his scale of warfare, too gigantic for his numbers, weakened their powers and general effect*. On the fourth of May Giacomo del Verme with the Milanese army invaded Bologna but having been repulsed at Primalcuore by Giovanni Barbiano with great vigour and the loss of twenty "*Bombarde*" or cannon, (which according to Ammirato were now first used in Italian warfare) and hearing of Hawkwood's arrival at Bologna he decamped during the night and retreated to Modena. This auspicious beginning was followed in June by the capture of Padua which Francesco Novello da Carrara with a small German force his own spirit and the good will of his subjects, had successfully accomplished. The whole country was up in arms to assist him: for though his father had been unpopular from the heavy burdens which his war with Verona had occasioned Francesco was not, and the Paduan citizens had not found the paradise they expected under Galeazzo's dominion: neither could they tamely brook their degradation from the rank of a metropolis to that of a mere provincial town, nor the rapacious tyranny of a deputed government in the hereditary seat of their native princes. The whole Paduan territory therefore soon returned to its allegiance and even Venice herself, now alive to the general danger, looked on with satisfaction at his progress This blow disconcerted Visconte who was suddenly forced again to recall Del Verme from Bologna; but

* S. Ammirato, Lib. xv., p. 804.



Mantua and Ferrara, his allies from fear not friendship, were secretly pleased at the event and only required a plausible excuse to withdraw.

Verona followed the example of Padua but having no adult native prince to lead and unite the people, bad measures of defence were adopted; quarrels ensued; a strong Milanese faction existed in the town, and the citadel being still in Galeazzo's hands, a commander who happened to pass on his way to relieve that of Padua taking advantage of this crisis recovered the place with terrible and universal slaughter. Cruelty, outrage, and devastation raged uncontrolled, and the far-famed and ancient capital of the house of La Scala remained for some time desolate. The Milanese general flushed with success passed on to Padua, but finding skill, and order, and spirit in the place, contented himself with reenforcing the fortress and retired to Vicenza. Stephen Duke of Bavaria Bernabo's son-in-law, roused by Francesco da Carrara and the persuasions of Florentine gold, soon after arrived from Germany with but half his promised force, yet served to protect Padua where he remained almost in idleness: the citadel surrendered in August to Francesco, who simultaneously defeated a Milanese detachment sent to relieve it. Thus lightened, Carrara turned his arms on the Marquis of Este; occupied several towns in the Polesine, and laid siege to Rovigo. Albert of Ferrara only wanting such a pretext, by means of Venice and Stephen of Bavaria reconciled himself with Padua, Bologna and Florence in October, but still preserving his friendship with Milan*.

The Duke of Bavaria's failure in not bringing the force which he had been paid for; his subsequent inactivity in despite of every remonstrance; and his unblushing demand for further supplies, disturbed the equanimity of Florence; more especially when her cool and somewhat haughty refusal

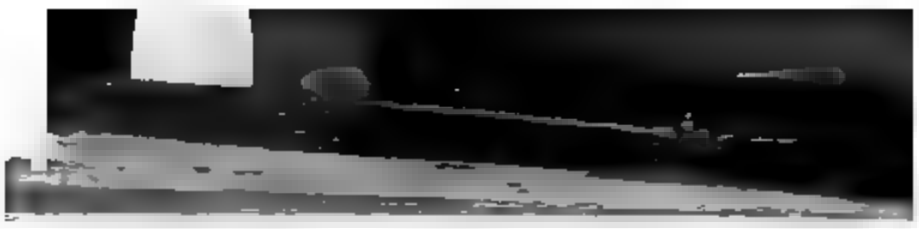
* Leon. Aretino, Lib. x.— S. Ammirato, Lib. xv., p. 805. — Muratori, Anno 1390.

produced the avowal of his intention not to move from Padua except to return into Germany, unless his wishes were granted. This disconcerted all the allied movements for a while, and gave a fair opening for the mixture of Milanese ducats in the transaction, so that disgusted with Florence and bribed by Visconte, Stephen retired with great loss of honour even amongst his own followers, one of whom, Henry de Montfort, with six hundred lances indignantly remained in the service of that republic *. Meanwhile the Tuscan campaign was actively maintained without any decided result; for Visconte dared not send reënforcements with the Lombard army on his flank, and the sudden death of Giovanni degli Ubaldini, not without some unfounded suspicions of Florentine poison, greatly weakened the moral force of his arms, for in Hawkwood's opinion Giovanni was the first captain of the age. A.D. 1391.

The Duke of Bavaria's defection made Florence send Hawkwood to Padua, not so much to defend that city as to keep the war out of Tuscany; and the King of France's terms being a recognition of Clement VII. as true pope, and his own supremacy in Florence with an annual tribute, they were disdainfully rejected and the Count d' Armagnac was engaged with a large force to invade Lombardy. An attack by Florence on the Mantuan territory detached Gonzaga from the Milanese league and secured his neutrality; but the campaign was cut short through the discovery of a plot to murder Hawkwood and Francesco da Carrara, in which Astorre Manfredi of Faenza was the principal agent of Galeazzo.

When this disturbance subsided the original plan of campaign was resumed, namely, that while Armagnac advanced by the Alexandria road south of the Po, Hawkwood with the combined army was to march from Padua into the heart of the

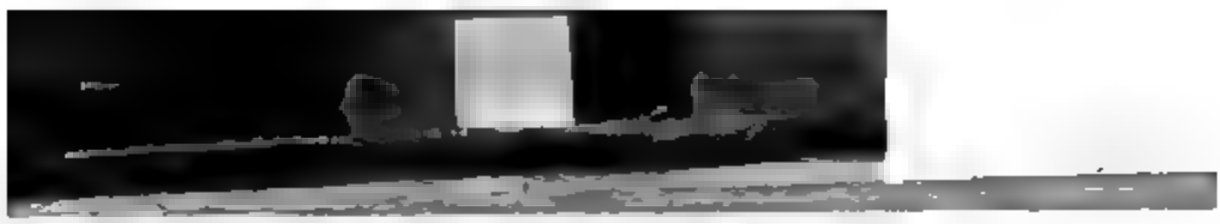
* S. Ammirato, Lib. xv., p. 809.— Cagnola, Storia di Milano, Lib. ii°, p. 22, who accuses Florence of having defrauded Stephen of his subsidy.



Milanese, unite with the Frenchman and carry everything before him. It was a formidable arrangement even without the Bavarian army, and after beating Taddeo del Verme, Hawkwood entered the Brescian districts on the tenth of May with a force of near twenty thousand men of all arms, while another division from Bologna attacked the Reggio and Parmesan territories to distract the enemy's attention *.

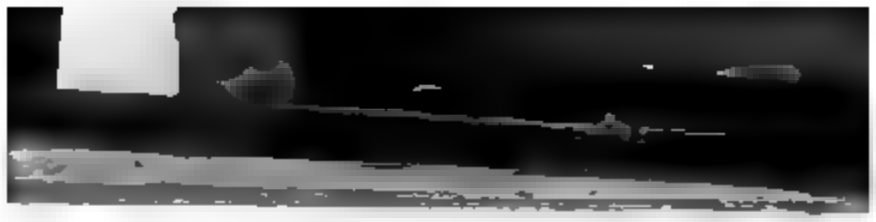
But Armagnac showed no signs of life all that month or the next; so that Hawkwood beginning to feel a scarcity of provisions occasioned by the gradually increasing forces of Milan under Jacopo del Verme and Ugolotto Biancardo, the devastator of Verona, was at last compelled to retire. The details of this retreat are variously related, and unless two distinct movements are supposed, very contradictory, at least on the main fact of its having occurred *before*, or having been *caused* by Armagnac's defeat and death at Alexandria. Hawkwood had hitherto supported his army with ease in that abundant country, had advanced to within a few miles of Milan itself, and insulted Gian-Galeazzo by celebrating the festival of San Giovanni on the banks of the Adda. Now however the augmented army of Jacopo del Verme amounting as Corio says to three thousand lances and ten thousand foot of all arms, intercepted his supplies and with the aid of the inhabitants kept complete command of that country: it was starvation to remain; and retreat in face of such an enemy with the rivers Oglio, Mincio, and Adige in his rear, became a difficult and very dangerous operation. In these circumstances Hawkwood determined if possible to bring del Verme to battle and therefore sent him a challenge, the refusal of which by a superior force was in those chivalrous days counted disgraceful if not cowardly. But Jacopo del Verme was too sagacious a general to be really moved by the fear of such consequences when sure of his game, yet had no hesitation in accepting the defiance: Hawkwood

* Scip. Ammirato, Lib. xv., p. 816.—Poggio, Lib. iii., p. 74.



accordingly marched next morning to within a mile of his antagonist's entrenchments in expectation of battle, but Jacopo was too wise to forego a certain advantage for a doubtful victory and consequently remained in camp. Hawkwood then addressing his troops, said that as a battle was so distasteful to their enemy they had now only to rely on a long and perilous retreat, which if they would preserve their wonted discipline, and trust to him he had no doubt of accomplishing. The Englishman's courage, talents, and prudence were so well known that he inspired universal confidence and was answered by acclamations, wherefore after hiding five hundred lances under Count Conrad in a thick wood on his line of march near the ford of a stream, the retreat was purposely begun in haste and apparent confusion. Del Verme hung on his rear with a strong body of cavalry intending to attack in full force during Hawkwood's passage of the river, but when they were well passed the ambush, Conrad issued out and the army suddenly facing about at the same moment attacked and destroyed the whole detachment: after this Hawkwood resumed his march; with equal caution and celerity he crossed the Oglio, Mincio, and Adige, and after infinite peril arrived with some loss on the friendly soil of Padua *. Intelligence was subsequently received that Armagnac, having resisted all the persuasions of Clement VII. at Avignon seconded by the Dukes of Berri and Burgundy and more powerfully by Milanese ducats, had crushed a mutinous division of his army and was resolved to be faithful. Having crossed the Alps he at last appeared in Italy, whereupon Hawkwood instantly wrote to urge his immediate junction, warning him not to be tempted by any lesser object; and again

* Cronica Estense, tom. xiv., Rer. Ital. Scrip. Muratori, Annales 1391. —Corio, Parte iii^a, folio 270.— S. Ammirato, Lib. xv., p. 817.— Andrea Gatari, tomo xvii., Rerum. Ital. Scrip. and Apud Muratori, Ann., Anno 1391. — Mem. Stor. di Ser Naddo, p. 125.—Mecatti Storia Cronologica di Firenze, vol. i°, p. 312.



advanced into the territory of Cremona hoping to give him his left hand near that city. Armagnac marched forward in all the confidence of youth and early reputation, at the head of from ten to fifteen thousand cavalry, despising the Lombards and speaking of them everywhere with contempt. He had beaten and destroyed a detachment of Gascons on their march to Galeazzo's army and unmindful of Hawkwood's entreaties he not only delayed before Castellaccio where del Verme had placed a strong garrison, but on the 25th July defied that general in his head-quarters at Alexandria and not even with his whole force, but only a chosen company of five, or according to Ammirato fifteen hundred French gentlemen as young and fiery as himself. Dismounting in mockery at the gates they irritated the garrison by loud cries of "*Come out you vile Lombards;*" several skirmishes ensued until Jacopo convinced that his antagonists were unsupported, engaged them in front with one detachment while he sent another out by a circuitous route to take them in flank and rear. The French and their horses were fatigued with previous fighting and excessive heat; but dismounting they fought gallantly on foot for several hours until all were killed or made prisoners. D'Armagnac exhausted, wounded, and humbled, was taken into Alexandria, and either from incautiously drinking, the effects of his wound, or as some say, from poison, died in a few hours His army panic-struck, raised the siege of Castellaccio and retreated in confusion. Having been purposely misled by their guides amongst the Alpine passes of Nizza della Paglia and Incisa, the mountaineers destroyed them in thousands and Jacopo del Verme following closely, completed the disaster.

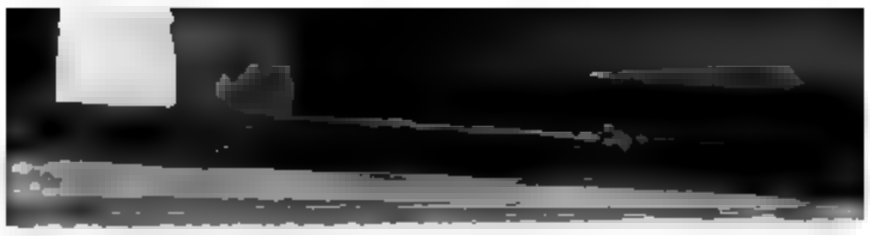
Thus ended the hopes of Florence in this quarter, after an almost incredible expense, amounting according to Leonardo Aretino secretary of the republic, who quotes the treasury books, to 1,266,000 florins: but even this victory is differently stated by some authors, who assert that a pitched battle took place

with the total discomfiture of the French army. Amongst multitudes of prisoners the two Florentine ambassadors Rinaldo Ganfigliazzi, and Giovanni de' Ricci fell into Galeazzo's hands: the former was soon ransomed for 2500 florins; but the latter paid for his bold philippic against Visconte by many months' imprisonment, the imminent risk of his life, and a final ransom of 7000 florins; which however was paid by the government *.

Relieved from this danger Gian-Galeazzo's forces were immediately directed against Hawkwood and subsequently on Florence itself. The retreat which the English general made on this occasion is celebrated by all Italian writers as the most able of his exploits and in their opinion gives him a place amongst the greatest captains of antiquity. The details are however obscure and the relative force of the combatants extremely uncertain; we only know from the same authorities that he was far outnumbered by his enemies but greatly overmatched them in professional ability.

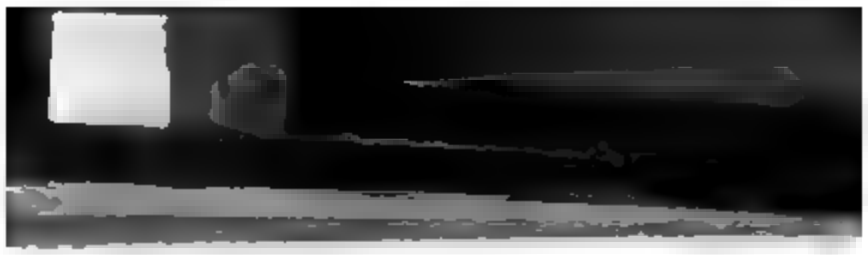
Rumours of d'Armagnac's fate had already reached him, but uncertain of their truth he still held his ground in the expectation of better tidings, until the appearance of Jacopo's victorious army decided his backward movement. Hawkwood was encamped at a place called Paterno in the Cremonese territory when the enemy pitched his tents a mile and a half distant on the opposite bank of a small stream which flowed between the armies: he deemed it unsafe to retreat in face of a superior force all flushed with recent victory, until he had tamed their audacity by some previous castigation. Keeping timidly within his camp for four successive days he endured with apparent

* Goro Dati, Stor. Fior. p. xxxiii.—Mem. Stor. di Ser Naddo, p. 125.—Leon. Aretino, Lib. x., folio 188.—Poggio Bracciolini, Lib. iii°, p. 75.—Corio, Storie Milanese, Parte iii^a, foglio 270.—Scip. Ammirato, Lib. xv., p. 820.—Muratori, Annali, Anno 1391.—Boninsegni, Storia Fiorentina, Lib. iv., p. 706.—Cagnola, Storia di Milano, Lib. ii°, p. 21.



alarm all the mockery, insults, and repeated defiance of the enemy who emboldened by this conduct determined to attack his entrenchments. There was a broad plain between the armies bisected by the stream above mentioned and inclosed in almost every direction by hedges, so as to preclude any rapid movements of cavalry. Expecting a real attack the next morning Hawkwood marshalled his troops behind their tents all ready to mount, and soon saw Del Verme cross the stream with a larger force than usual in a sort of confident disorder that assured his own success: when well up to the entrenchments he charged them from the right and left with his whole force, broke their ranks, followed them up across the stream to their very camp, killed and wounded a great number and finally made from twelve to sixteen hundred horses and several condottieri prisoners. Notwithstanding this success Hawkwood was in a perilous condition, for Jacopo's army, originally superior, was every day increasing: his own resources were cut off; if he moved it was a battle on unequal terms; if he stayed still he starved: the Oglio, Mincio, and Adige were again in his rear, and the only chance was at once to ford the first and gain a night march on the enemy. Del Verme assured of his prey sent him a caged fox which Hawkwood received good-humouredly, remarking to the messenger that the animal seemed cheerful enough and knew very well by what door he intended to escape. He instantly cleared the ground in front of his camp as if determined to give battle; fixed many standards and banners on the trees and other conspicuous places in his lodgements; left divers carts chests and boxes packed with rubbish to detain the plunderers, and many trumpeters to sound an alarm before daylight as if the whole army were ready for action. Thus prepared the retreat commenced at midnight in profound silence; the Oglio was reached without accident and most of the army safe on the left bank ere the enemy came up: a rear-guard of picked soldiers and four hundred English archers

on horseback covered the passage of the rest, who rejoining their comrades on the Mincio passed that river unmolested, continuing their retreat until within ten miles of the Adige where they halted for the night. About midnight the troops were startled from their sleep by the loud rushing of distant waters and a swamping of the whole surrounding country: Galeazzo had ordered the dykes of the Adige to be cut; and as all the rivers in this neighbourhood are on a higher level than the plain this dismal inundation struck terror into every breast but Hawkwood's. When day dawned, or before it; leaving his colours flying and sacrificing all the baggage and camp equipage; with the wave up to his horses' girths, this veteran led the way amidst a wide waste of waters: moving parallel to the Adige some miles below Legnago, his dreary course was continued all that day and the greater part of the following night with various accidents and loss of life: here both horse and foot were plunged in mud; there submerged in the canals and ditches which spread like cobwebs over the plain, crossing their line of march at every step, unseen, and covered by one broad sheet of watery desolation! In this way the valley of Verona was painfully and perilously traversed with the loss of many a gallant man and noble steed until the lofty dykes of the Adige, which loomed in the distance like the land of promise, were successfully gained. Here the army rested, and through the firmness and ability of one man was providentially saved; but numbers had perished: some by fatigue; some drowned; some planted irrecoverably in mud; others were rescued by clinging to the horses' tails; while the enemy seeing only one wide expanse of water believed that like the host of Egypt all had perished! But the "Fox" was still alive; and after a day's rest he passed the Adige and kept the troops in readiness for further service. It was a glorious feat; Hawkwood's fame resounded through Italy and public confidence redoubled; for though in the extreme of age his



indomitable energy and daring equalled those of the youngest soldier in his army and inspired them all*.

Muratori has been exclusively followed in the supposition and relation of two distinct retreats by Hawkwood, for in no other way can the discrepancies of Italian authors be so easily reconciled: if it were not for these contradictions the obvious conclusion would be that he made one bold march to unite with d'Armagnac whose defeat rendered it useless as well as dangerous. But according to Ser Naddo; a cotemporary author; to Corio, Ammirato, Mecatti; and especially Andrea Gatari's History of Padua as cited by Muratori; Hawkwood retired before Jacopo del Verme in June, or very early in July, and consequently long before d'Armagnac's defeat by that general on the twenty-fifth of the latter month. Yet Leonardo Aretino, Poggio, Giovio and Platina who are followed by Sismondi, make his retreat a consequence of that disaster: Aretino, a cotemporary, and Poggio who is nearly so; are both sparing of dates, which by the latter seem not unfrequently sacrificed to the better rounding of a period. From such contradictions it is not easy to disentangle the truth; but as more than a month elapsed between the Alexandrian disaster and the subsequent invasion of Tuscany it may be supposed that Galeazzo's designs on Florence were not retarded by a slight obstacle, that neither army was idle; and that Jacopo del Verme was probably employed, as above related, in forcing Hawkwood back on Padua.

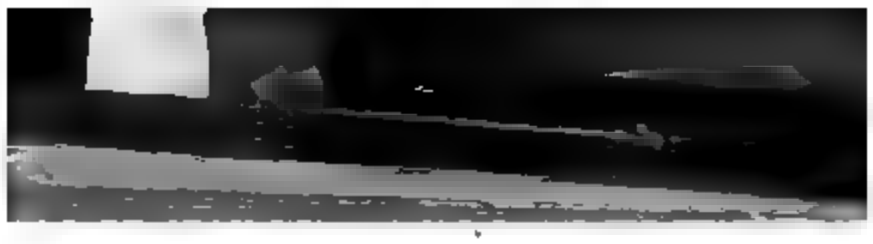
The Florentines had been so pleased with this general's conduct throughout the war and from the late attempt on his life so convinced of his fidelity, that both he and his sons were admitted to the high and rarely-bestowed honours of citizenship, with an additional pension of 2000 florins and complete

* Paulo Giovio Vite, p. 139.—Platina, Vite de' Papi, Bonifazio, ix.—Poggio, Lib. iii°, p. 77.—Leon. Aretino, Lib. x., foglio 188.—Sismondi, vol. v., p. 323.

freedom from taxation. And as he was now in years and anxious about the destiny of his wife and children, 1000 florins of pension were assigned to her at his decease with a promise of 2000 more in marriage portions to each of his daughters *.

D'Armagnac's defeat though somewhat compensated by Hawkwood's unexpected safety, spread consternation at Florence: from the high pride of hope, nay the certainty of crushing Gian-Galeazzo, she was suddenly dashed to the depths of despair and alarmed even for her own existence. But the Florentine spirit was ever buoyant, her resources were still productive, and no time was lost in useless lamentations. It was expected that Visconte would instantly direct his whole force upon Bologna overwhelm that republic, and then with augmented numbers pour down on Tuscany: Hawkwood therefore had instant orders to defend that city leaving six hundred lances and crossbows for the protection of Padua; but Galeazzo was more intent on present vengeance; the fall of Florence he knew would bring down Bologna, he dreaded her success and aimed at her subjugation but complained that with generals as able, and more numerous legions, no permanent lodgement had been yet made on the Florentine territory while his had been for eighteen months the constant seat of war. Jacopo del Verme was therefore ordered to enter Tuscany by Sarzana on the river Magra and await the Senese army's junction in the Pisan territory. This caused Hawkwood's instant recall and in rapid marches by the Sambuca road he crossed the Apennines, reached Pistoia, and established his head quarters at San Miniato on the left bank of the Arno. Here Luigi di Capua joined from the Senese border, and along with the subsequent reënforcements from Bologna under Giovanni da Barbiano, increased the forces to about twelve thousand men of all arms, which placed Hawk-

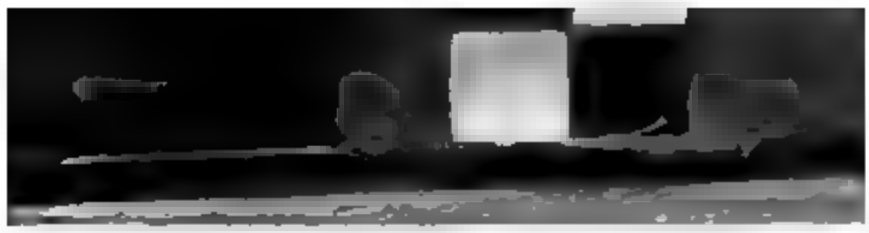
* S. Ammirato, Lib. xv., p. 813.



wood on somewhat more equal terms with his antagonist. All these arrangements were carried on by the "*Dieci della Balìa*" a portion of whom was periodically renewed, so that this council had all the experience and permanence of the former "EIGHT OF WAR" without the same danger of embarrassement from invidious unpopularity or mere factious opposition. Notwithstanding this energy neither of the belligerents were averse from peace for both had severely smarted; therefore at the earnest desire of Boniface IX. Antonio Adorno Doge of Genoa, and Riccardo Caracciolo Grand Master of Rhodes, his legate in that city, invited them to a conference. After long discussions at Florence, during which Adorno was accused of being a partisan of Galeazzo and therefore a doubtful mediator, Guido del Palagio, Filippo Adimari and Lodovico degli Albergotti were despatched as ambassadors, yet without any relaxation of hostilities. In the interim Jacomo del Verme had crossed the border and towards the middle of September placed himself in position between the Era river and Cascina on the Pisan road to await the Senese army which finding it dangerous to pass Hawkwood, the junction was ultimately effected at Casole, about twelve miles westward of Siena.

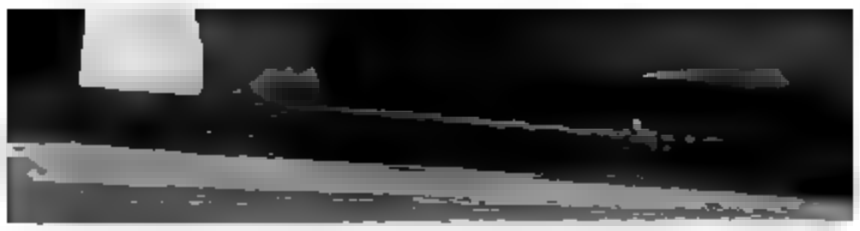
Three thousand lances and five thousand infantry or about fourteen thousand men of all arms there passed in review according to some authors, but Corio the Milanese historian with more probability; if we may judge from Hawkwood's aftercaution even when reenforced by ten thousand men; makes Visconte's army with a detachment from Perugia amount to more than twenty thousand combatants, a prodigious force, as he observes, for a small state in those days*. Hawkwood moving parallel to his antagonist occupied Poggibonzi about ten miles north-eastward of Casole, his right wing, for the convenience of quarters, being at Colle on the Elsa about four miles off, and his left pushed forward as far as Staggia, at a

* Corio, Stor. Milanese, Parte iii^a, foglio 270.



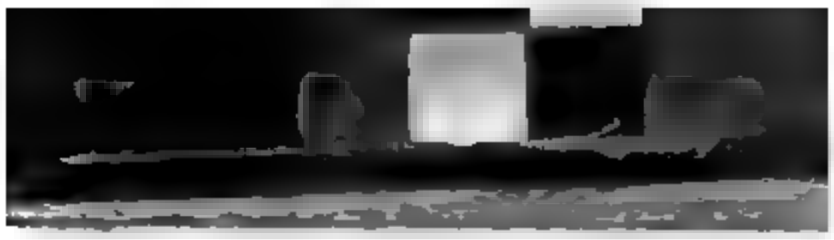
nearly equal distance on the Siena road, both being advanced in different directions to the right and left, and the two roads uniting in an angle about a mile and a half from Poggibonzi. Smaller detachments were scattered about in various places, and Jacopo taking advantage of this, suddenly appeared with his whole force, passed Staggia with impunity, defied Hawkwood under the walls of Poggibonzi, and marching onward encamped in the Florentine territory between Vico and Certaldo, which he ravaged without impediment. The Englishman ashamed of this surprise, which seems to have arisen from the neglect of his two advanced guards, gathered up his troops and pursuing Jacomo, occupied a position within three miles of him the same evening. Del Verme dislodged that night and after carrying the small town of Canneto encamped at the river Elsa's mouth not far from Hawkwood's first position of San Miniato. The latter following close, halted in the evening between Empoli and Monte Lupo while del Verme shackled probably by Visconte's timidity in warlike operations, and therefore more desirous of devastation than battle, decamped on the twentieth of September, passed the Arno, and on the following night encamped at a place called Casale, (probably Casal Guidi) about eighteen miles from Florence. Hawkwood crossed the river at Signa and marching direct on Tizzanō halted within three miles of the enemy where he was speedily reenforced by ten thousand men rapidly collected from the surrounding country.

Great emulation existed between the two commanders, for though Hawkwood was generally held superior, Jacopo had gained considerable renown by reducing him to such extremities in Lombardy, as well as for his victory at Alexandria; and even by his partial surprise and devastation of the Florentine territory in the face of so formidable a foe. The increasing force of his rival however startled him; a council of war resolved on retreat, and the twenty-fourth of September, a few

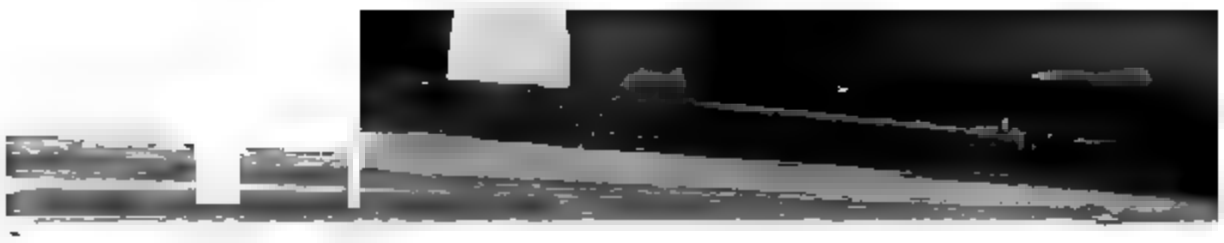


hours before day, the army decamped in silence taking the road to Uzzàno, Taddeo del Verme with five hundred lances and all the infantry forming the rear guard. Hawkwood had been repeatedly urged to fight by the government, and as constantly refused, saying that a retreating army was a beaten army; yet fancying that Pistoia would be their line of march he had occupied that road, but now finding his mistake despatched a thousand lances directly after them and all the infantry to intercept their retreat amongst the hills and employ them until the main body came up. Del Verme was already safe, but Taddeo overtaken by double his own numbers gallantly accepted the combat, ordering his footmen, as was then usual, to mingle in the throng and rip up the bellies of the enemy's horses. At this moment the Florentine infantry appeared amongst the heights and gave the Milanese full occupation; Taddeo was routed with the loss of two thousand infantry killed and a thousand prisoners while two hundred cavalry fell either by death or capture into the Florentine hands. Amongst the captives were Taddeo del Verme himself, Gentile di Varano, and Jacopo d'Appiano who was afterwards exchanged for Giovanni Ricci and of whose family we shall again have occasion to speak. Hawkwood still followed cautiously and had blame for his slowness; but there was a skilful and dangerous enemy before him, whom he was well pleased to see in full retreat after having thus retaliated for the surprise at Poggibonzi. Jacopo continued his march with some fighting and the repulse of an attack made against Hawkwood's orders, but with one halt at Monte Carlo never ceased retreating until the army passed Lucca and occupied a strong position on the Serchio between Pisa and that city.

Hawkwood now resumed his central quarters at San Miniato while Jacopo again advanced to Cascina; and Galeazzo chagrined at his failure insisted, if he could do no more, on his intercepting the Florentine provision-trade from Pisa which



would materially influence the conditions of peace. After an unsuccessful attempt to surprise Santa Maria-a-Monte which Hawkwood baffled, Jacopo quitted the Florentines' territory towards the middle of October and encamping between Sarzana and La Venza forced Piero Gambacorta to save his own state by arresting all supplies to Florence for fifteen days. This was compensated by the revolt of Piero da Coreggio in Lombardy and the defeat of Ugolotto Bianciardi before Castel Baldo by the Paduans, both of which served to hasten the conclusion of peace. But Antonio Adorno leaned towards Milan and even attempted to seduce Gambacorta, who however honestly resisted not only these entreaties but the more powerful efforts of Galeazzo himself, for through Jacopo d'Appiano the dear but treacherous friend of Piero, he also strove to detach that chief entirely from Florence, or at least induce him to stop her supplies until the following April. On Gambacorta's refusal Jacopo del Verme advanced once more and from the valleys of the Serchio and Calci so harassed the Florentine commerce that in the middle of December a large and numerously escorted convoy under the command of John Belcott an English condottiere, either by his cowardice or treachery, was captured despite of the heroic exertions of Hugo de Montfort who with a large detachment advanced from Florence to meet it. This was the last act of hostility in Tuscany, and with the exception of some minor affairs and small naval successes may be said to have finished the first portion of this expensive war. A.D. 1392. Florence however suspecting the good faith of Gian-Galeazzo and both mediators called in the community of Genoa as a third party and under their auspices peace was concluded on the twenty-sixth of January 1392. By this treaty Francesco da Carrara and Gian-Galeazzo Maria Visconte were to retain all the dominions they actually possessed except those in Tuscany: Francesco was to pay 10,000 florins annually to Visconte for fifty years; all offences of citizens



serving on either side were to be pardoned; all captured places in Tuscany were to be reciprocally given up by the belligerents except Valiano Montepulciano and Lucignano; the Count of Vertù was not to meddle in Tuscan affairs nor the Bolognese or Florentines in those of Lombardy except to protect their allies; the existing free companies were to be prohibited by all parties; no encouragement given to others, and every picture painted in derision of either side was to be destroyed. These conditions thus arranged occasioned an after-question amongst the deputies about sureties for their observance. "*The sword,*" exclaimed the Florentine, Guido del Palagio, with animation, "*the sword shall be our guarantee for everything; for Visconte has felt our power and we his*"*.

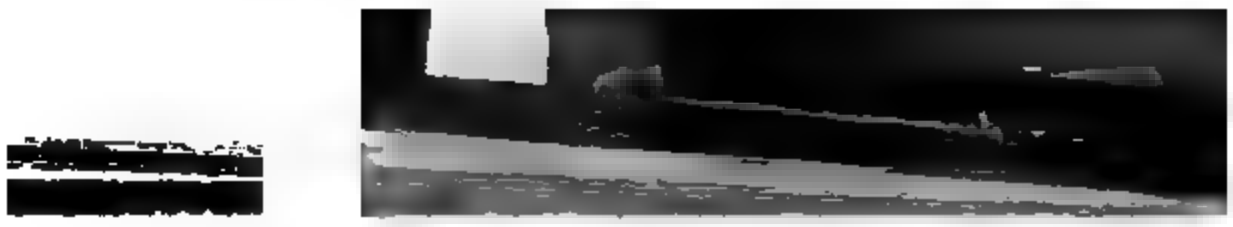
Thus ended the first act of this drama with the usual effects of war; debt, suffering, and no satisfactory result; for neither the ambition of Visconte nor the apprehensions of Florence were diminished; and the consequent interlude prolonged its devastations; for on the cessation of war its "*Tools,*"—the soldiers of that age and country really deserve the name, instantly turned on their employers and in the guise of free companies still distracted Italy. Azzo da Castello, Broio di Treolino, Bandolino da Bagnacavallo, and Biordo di Michelotti, all distinguished leaders who had served in Visconte's army, gave well-founded cause not only of general fear, but of the belief that they were still secretly retained by Galeazzo and intended for the covert annoyance of his former adversaries. A league was therefore formed between Florence, Bologna, Ferrara, Padua, Faenza, Ravenna, Imola; and afterwards Mantua, against these bands, with an indirect reference to Visconte, and the agitated condition of Tuscany of which he knew well how to take advantage, increased the necessity for such a compact.

* Poggio, Lib. iii., p. 80, &c*.—Leon. Aretino, Lib. x., folio 189.—Goro Dati, p. 54.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xv., p. 823.—Muratori, Anni 1391-2.—Sismondi, vol. v., cap. 54.—Paulo Tronci, Annali Pisani, vol. iv. p. 156.

Lucca was in a state of anarchy from civil contention; Lazzero Guinigi murdered Forteguerra de' Forteguerri, the gonfalonier of justice in the public palace: then pitched his body from a window, and after committing many more homicides usurped the sovereignty of the republic under that popular title. At Pisa a detected plot against Gambacorta's life was only the prelude to a deeper tragedy: Genoa after furious conflicts, bloodshed and exile, finally chased Adorno from the throne and elected Antonio di Montalti in his place, while Perugia was incessantly tormented by the Guelph and Ghibeline factions, and at last gave herself in despair to Boniface, who although he immediately occupied that city was soon compelled to remove on account of their dissensions*.

In Pisa Gambacorta had always proved too steady a friend of Florence to escape the enmity of his own countrymen, and from his inflexible adherence to that state had also incurred the hatred of Gian-Galeazzo who saw in the possession of Pisa his surest instrument of Florentine subjugation. According to most writers Gambacorta had pursued a wise and humane, though perhaps somewhat despotic system of government; had maintained peace, fostered commerce, and made the republic flourish. Paulo Tronci however asserts that the whole family had now become hateful to the citizens, even of their own faction the Bergolini; as well from the haughty insolence of Gherardo and Pietro, Gambacorta's sons; one of whom was archbishop; as from the extreme power and vehemence of Pietro himself, whose riches exactions and despotism made him slight every law whether imperial or municipal, and whose pride disdained the admonitions of his friends; so that the exiled Raspanti in conjunction with Galeazzo began to spread their nets for his ruin: other Pisan authorities such as Sardo, Roncioni, and the unknown author of the "*Cronaca di Pisa*" give substantially the same account, so that Gambacorta's patriotism seems in a

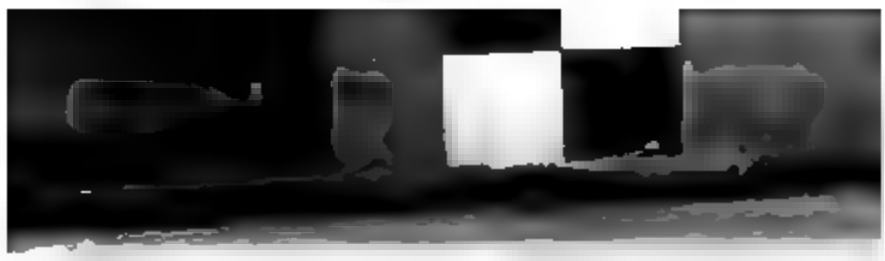
* Muratori, Anno 1392.



great measure due to the gratitude of Florentine writers for his unflinching attachment to their republic*. He had long given all his confidence to Jacopo d'Appiano, a man, as it would seem, of low birth, unscrupulous conscience, and great sagacity; whose father had been a follower of the Gambacorta family and had lost his head in their cause and for which reason Piero had made Jacopo share his subsequent prosperity. Appiano was Piero's private secretary, had by him been made chancellor of the republic, was privy to every secret, managed the principal affairs of Pisa both external and internal with supreme authority, and thus gained great riches followers and influence independent of Gambacorta, who implicitly trusted him. His son Vanni d'Appiano had been exchanged by Galeazzo for Giovanni Ricci, and was treated as a son by Visconte who lost no opportunity of inciting Jacopo to assume the sovereignty of Pisa, nor could Piero ever be persuaded by the warnings of Florence and other well-wishers, to suspect his friend's integrity †. This old servant, for he had seventy winters on his head; secretly assembled a band of followers in Pisa on the real or false pretext of defending himself against his deadly foe Jacopo Rosso de' Lanfranchi who was seeking his and his son Vanni's life, and Piero still deaf to friendly warning, appointed a day to reconcile them. An affray meanwhile took place, Lanfranco and his son were killed on their way to the place of arbitration by Jacopo's followers who ensconced themselves in his palace: Piero instantly demanded the homicides and was refused; the city became tumultuous; he had plenty of support, but declared that the ordinary course of justice would be sufficient without disturbing the community. The city guard therefore took arms but were

* Paulo Tronci, Annali Pisani, vol. iv., p. 158. — Ranieri Sardo, "Cronaca Pisana," cap. from ccv. to ccx. — Raffaello Roncioni, Lib. xvi., p. 949. —Cronaca di Pisa.—Muratori, S.R.I., tom. xv., p. 1084.

† Tronci, Annali, vol. iv., p. 158, Anno 1392.



beaten by Vanni d'Appiano: Piero's palace was simultaneously attacked by Jacopo as is said at the instigation of the citizens; the son soon joined, but Gambacorta would allow no weapon to be aimed at his ancient friend; he was alone and armed, in the "Loggia" of his new palace, and confidingly descended at the treacherous prayers of Jacopo to treat for peace. No sooner was he outside and had retired from the throng to mount his horse, than Jacopo extended his hand towards him as if in friendship, but it was the signal for murder, and in a moment old Piero Gambacorta fell dead with many wounds. Some writers say that while calling on Appiano not to commit so much evil he was first struck by a missile which felled him without penetrating his armour, but his helmet falling off he was killed by a lance thrust: be this as it may, the Bergolini were shortly dispersed; Piero's sons wounded, imprisoned; and poisoned within a week: the dwellings of Gambacorta, and his faction with those of many Florentines were abandoned to plunder and the city filled with Appiano's armed followers. On the twenty-fifth of October he was proclaimed, apparently by the public will, Captain and Defender of Pisa with all Gambacorta's authority, and after a few days assumed the honours of knighthood.

He was now absolute lord of the republic, and to secure himself demanded aid of Visconte, the original mover of all, who joyfully despatched two hundred lances to his assistance with the secret resolution of ultimately commanding Pisa. None had pity on the mangled remains of Piero until night came, when some compassionate friars from a neighbouring convent gave an humble sepulchre to the late powerful lord of the commonwealth. "O what cruelty!" exclaims Naddo of Monte Catini a cotemporary author, "O what cruelty was this! O what an example for this wicked world!" "Such a man as was Messer Piero, first to be so murdered and then for his

lifeless body to be so ignominiously treated! and all by his bosom friend and dearest companion! *"

There was now apparent peace in Italy save the disturbances from disbanded soldiers and pontifical nepotism: the latter troubled La Marca; and the former covertly moved by Visconte, levied repeated contributions on Tuscany in defiance of every league. Lombardy appeared tranquil but mischief lurked beneath; and in the summer of this year a Milanese embassy arrived at Florence to excuse certain transactions in that quarter which alarmed Mantua and endangered peace. No sooner were they departed than Francesco di Gonzaga himself arrived, nominally on a pilgrimage to Rome but really to form a secret league against Visconte: these princes had been friends, if such a name may be so prostituted in its application, but mutual hatred and vengeance now occupied the place of friendship. Gonzaga's wife was Bernabo's daughter and therefore cousin and sister-in-law to Gian-Galeazzo who feared her vindictive influence for the double murder of a father and a brother, wherefore it was settled to destroy her by means of her own husband whose gratitude he counted on for opening his eyes to her supposed infidelity. His ambassador accordingly concealed some forged letters in her cabinet and in Gian-Galeazzo's name gave Francesco notice of their existence: the papers were detected and the lady's secretary immediately tortured; subdued by pain he confessed all that was asked of him and lost his head; but Gonzaga distracted by jealousy, ordered his own wife's immediate execution although the mother of four children! The truth came subsequently to light, when struck with horror and remorse the unhappy man vowed eternal vengeance against Gian-Galeazzo Visconte;

A.D. 1393.

* Roncioni, Stor. Pisa, Lib. xvi., p. 949, &c.—Sardo Cronaca Pisana, cap. cv. to cx.—Goro Dati, Storia Fior., p. 40.—Mem. Stor. di Ser Naddo di Monte Cantini, p. 133. — Leon. Aretino, Lib. xi., foglio 194.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xvi., p. 835. — Tronci, Annali Pisa, vol. iv., p. 160.—Sismondi, vol. v., p. 332.

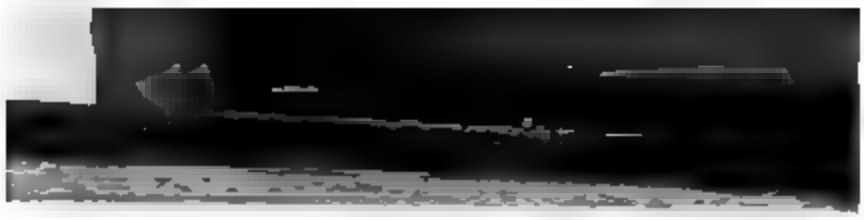
and the latter had sufficient audacity to denounce Gonzaga for the murder of his kinswoman! Very soon after this partly in retaliation for the building of a fortified bridge over the Po which Gonzaga had allowed the allies to construct at Borgo Forte he, by changing the Mincio's course, attempted to destroy the capital *.

Mantua is nearly encompassed by an upper and lower lake formed by the Mincio's waters after their issue from the Lago di Garda; and by turning the course of this river above the town Gian-Galeazzo hoped to form a pestiferous swamp which would have ultimately destroyed the whole population, or if drained by their subsequent industry, would still have ruined the natural defences. A vast dyke had already been erected above Borghetto and Valeggio, and a mountain was half tunnelled into the plain of Verona when Gonzaga came to implore the aid of Florence and Bologna. Neither of these cities intended to desert him, yet had no excuse for interference as Gian-Galeazzo's works were confined entirely to his own territory: engineers were however sent to examine them, and on their report the Mantuan envoys were told that neither arms nor allies would be necessary to stave off this danger, for nature was not to be controlled even by a despot, and would soon assert her independence. The mortified embassy retired in silence with this equivocal answer but ere it reached Mantua a sudden flood swept every work away and with them all the fears of Gonzaga and his trembling subjects †.

After this a disputed succession in Ferrara between Azzo d' Este the nearest legitimate heir, and the deceased Alberto's natural son Niccolo III. brought the Florentine and Milanese forces in opposition, but without any breach of peace and merely

* Ammirato, Lib. xv., p. 813. — Sismondi, vol. v., p. 329.

† Sismondi, vol. v., p. 336.—Muratori, Anno 1393.—Corio, Parte iii^a, foglio 272.

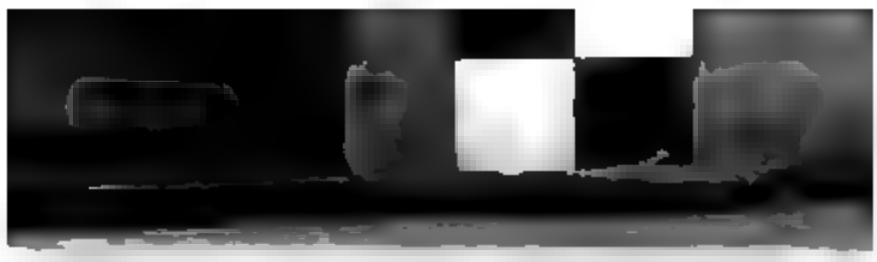


from espousing the conflicting pretensions of different candidates, the former of whom was ultimately made prisoner. Nor was Genoa less convulsed by Antonio Adorno's continual efforts to recover the ducal throne: the Doge Monaldo ceding to events resigned, and was succeeded by Pietro da Campo Fregoso, who in his turn gave way to Clemente di Promontorio, and he again with better prospects to Francesco Giustiniano, who, after baffling all the efforts of Adorno, finally succumbed to the Monaldo faction which again placed Antonio de' Monaldi on the ducal throne, and thus restored present tranquillity to that ever vexed city *.

A.D. 1394. War seemed again threatening and made Florence more keenly feel the loss of her favourite general Sir John Hawkwood who died suddenly at his villa on the seventeenth of March 1394. He was honourably buried in the cathedral church at the public expense and an equestrian portrait by Paulo Ucello, a celebrated painter of the day, placed over his tomb where it still remains, the marble monument once intended as a record of his exploits never having been erected.

Hawkwood was decidedly one of the ablest captains of the fourteenth century, but like many others of his day, dishonoured the military character by making war a mere sordid trade of skilful butchery adopted only for the accumulation of riches without any scruple about the means. Wide-spreading plunder, violence, and bloodshed marked his reckless course whenever the command of his employers or his soldiers' necessities required them; but his military discipline was perfect: prudent, cool, and daring; the army's confidence in him was unbounded, and from his school issued, according to Giovio, the ablest captains of that and the following century, such as Alberigo da Barbiano, Sforza, Braccio, Carlo Malatesta, Paulo

* Ammirato, Lib. xvi., p. 846.—Muratori, Anno 1393.



Orsino, and Mostarda, who revived the military spirit of Italy without the high moral qualities of the modern soldier *.

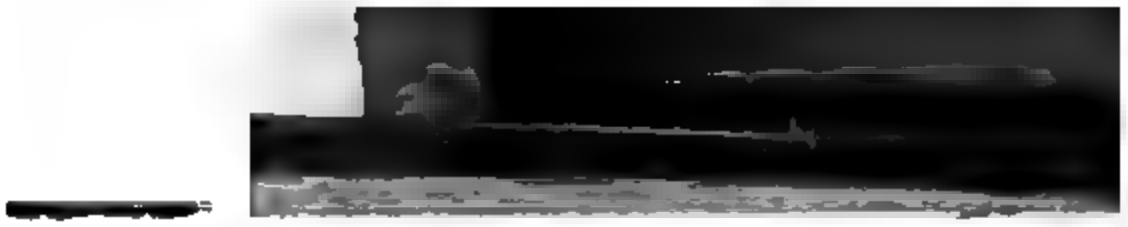
Civil war between Guelph and Ghibeline continued to rage in Genoa: Montaldo again abdicated; two more dukes followed in quick succession; Adorno attacked the town, was beaten, made prisoner, escaped, returned with fresh strength, and on the third of September once more mounted the ducal throne at the moment that his enemies were about to call in the perilous aid of Frenchmen †. Soon after this Gian-Galeazzo purchased the coveted title of Duke of Milan for 100,000 florins from the weak and needy Wenceslas and celebrated his coronation with uncommon magnificence. This was no empty title; save Pavia and its territory which were made into a county, it consolidated almost all the ancient league of Lombardy: but it was more important from the right of hereditary succession which it conferred; and more so still from the fatal consequences which ultimately attended it. The Lombard cities had long lost their freedom in fact, but not in law: their several rulers were *Tyrants*, not natural lords; the emperor alone was paramount, and he had never sanctioned their usurpation by any public act. The people therefore were theoretically supposed to be still masters of their own liberty and form of government; but this diploma gave stability and legitimacy to the Visconti dynasty. By their marriages with France and the ultimate failure of male heirs the duke of Orleans and his successors when kings of that country claimed the inheritance: this was again disputed by the emperors as a devolved fief of the empire, and hence the Italian wars of Louis XII. Francis I. and Charles V. with all their consequences: but Gian-Galeazzo could not foresee this and rejoiced in present honours as a pledge for the future stability of his race ‡.

A.D. 1395.

* Paulo Giovio Vite d' Huomini Illustri.

† Muratori, Anno 1394.

‡ Muratori, Anno 1395.—Corio, Stor



Some good offices performed for Lucca by Florence against a free company occasioned a closer alliance between them; and the adoption of a common banner for mutual defence inscribed with the word *Peace* had more sincerity than another league concluded in the following May with the ambassadors of Milan, Padua, Ferrara, Mantua, Bologna, Rimini, Faenza, Imola, Pisa, Siena, Perugia, and Città di Castello for reciprocal defence against all condottieri and every foreign interference in Italian affairs. It produced nothing for all was hollow and suspicion lurked under every smile: even Florence, alarmed at Visconte's secret machinations, was the first to break the agreement by sending Maso degli Albizzi to make an offensive and defensive alliance with France just as the queen, sister to Lodovic Duke of Bavaria had commissioned Buonaccorso Pitti to promote such an embassy. Neither had this any effect in consequence of pecuniary disputes with the General Count Bernard d'Armignac, the king's infirmity, the Duke of Orleans' strong opposition, and the slaughter of nearly a thousand French nobles and seven thousand followers at the battle of Nicopolis; for the enormous ransoms demanded after that disaster had drained France of gold and rendered her less eager for foreign expeditions. Both the treaty and battle of Nicopolis between Bajazet Ilderim and Sigismond of Hungary occurred in September; and as the Genoese soon after invested Charles VI. of France with the supreme dignity of their commonwealth,

A.D. 1396.

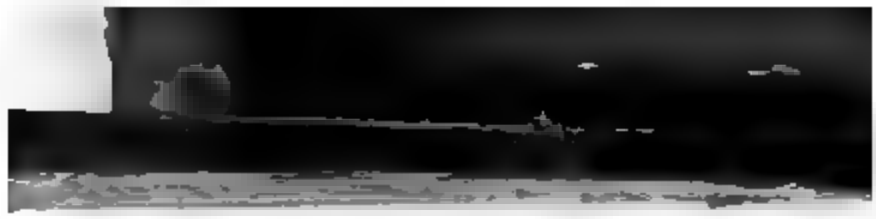
Mil., Parte iv^a^, folio 273.—Sismondi, vol. v., p. 341.—The principal places comprised in the new dukedom were Brescia, Bergamo, Como, Novara, Vercelli, Alessandria, Dertona, Bobbio, Piacenza, Reggio, Parma, Cremona, Lodi with its dependant places, Trento, Crema, Sonzino, Burmio, Borgo San Donino, Pontremoli, Massa Nuova, Feliciano, Rocca d' Aratio, with all that still remained in the territory of Asti: also Serravalle, Verona, Vicenza, Feltre, Belluno, Bassano, Sarzana, Laventina, Carrara, San Stefano, and all the diocese of Luni, with their territory and jurisdiction as a fief of the empire. (Vide *Corio delle Historie Milanese*, Parte iv^a^, foglio 274).

and that Asti now belonged to that kingdom as the portion of Valentina Visconte Duchess of Turenne, this monarch became more nearly interested in the affairs of Italy *.

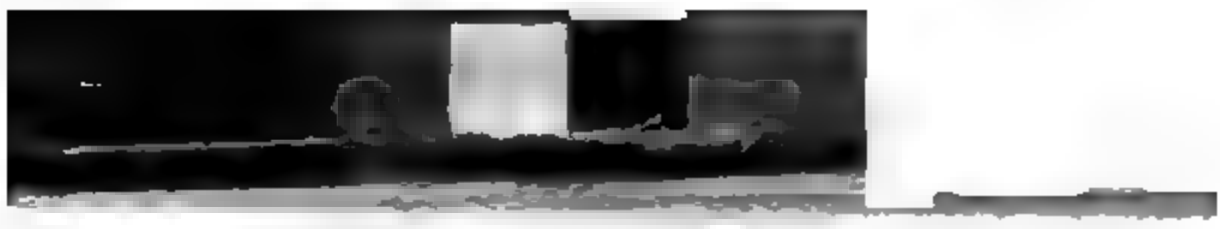
The French alliance excited Galeazzo's alarm; and as he believed that Florence was secretly assisting the Pisan exiles against d'Appiano with other indications of a hostile character, he determined to stave off the war from Lombardy by quietly sending strong reenforcements to assist Jacopo d'Appiano against these exiles, and still be ready to invade the Florentines at a moment's notice. The new tyrant of Pisa and his son, who seems to have been co-equal in authority, strongly urged this, for they wanted to follow Castruccio's steps and by means of Visconte acquire the lordship of Lucca, but Florence with increased influence from the French alliance kept strengthening her relations in Lombardy and Romagna.

Ten new officers of the Balià were elected, of whom Maso degli Albizzi was the soul; but they soon began to incur blame about the approaching war and their large expensive preparations: in consequence of these murmurs an embassy was despatched to make peace between Pisa and Lucca as well as with the Pisan exiles, and so remove all pretext for the assembly of so large a Milanese force in that state: this was speedily accomplished, and with strong professions of gratitude; but being thus free, Jacopo d' Appiano instantly turned his whole mind against Florence and determined to gain possession of San Miniato as a place of arms commanding the road about half way between the two capitals. To this end Giovanni da Barbiano was sent as a free condottiere towards the Lucchese frontier which drew the Florentine army into the Valdinievole to watch his motions: San Miniato A.D. 1397.

* Cronaca di Buonaccorso Pitti, pp. 48, 49, 54.—Memorie Stor. di Ser Naddo da Montecatini, p. 158.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xvi., p. 853.—Sismondi, vol. v., cap. lv.



was thus left exposed, and by means of a potent citizen named Benedetto Mangiadori an enemy to Florence, the governor fell by treachery and the people, as usual, were called to arms and liberty: they did take arms, but in favour of the Florentines, and San Miniato was almost instantaneously recovered although Mangiadori escaped. The first account of this treachery gave considerable alarm to the Florentines, the second urged them to vengeance: a council of six hundred Richiesti was instantly assembled; the conduct of Galeazzo was exposed; the incursions of Alberigo da Barbiano from the side of Siena, of Giovanni da Barbiano on that of Lucca, this attempt on San Miniato by Jacopo d'Appiano the mere tool of Visconte, and the Milanese army already prepared to invade Mantua; all were laid in strong relief before them and it was then asked if the Florentines were still to remain with their hands in their girdles as calm spectators of events? Opposition now ceased, war was declared by acclamation and the Balìa charged to press it with all their power and activity. Meanwhile Alberigo da Barbiano acting as if he were a free condottiere marched from Siena, burned Castellina, passed into Chianti, and devastated all that country, then crossed the Arno and ravaged the plain of Florence to within a mile of the capital: afterwards moving on Lastra and Signa he attacked the latter which was finally defended by the women, and with some loss, returned by San Casciano to Siena. War had not yet been declared, and the Florentine army under Bernadone della Serra was occupied in watching Giovanni da Barbiano on the Lucchese frontier, so that Alberigo made this sudden and unexpected inroad without opposition. The Florentines however in a short time found means to seduce Paulo Orsino, Biordo de' Michelotti, and also his brother with a large body of troops from Visconte's service, and Giovanni da Barbiano reengaged himself to Bologna, so that they were not only easy about themselves but sent assistance to Mantua now hard



pressed by the ducal forces: Alberigo was kept in check by Bernardone della Serra while an additional reenforcement of between three and four thousand men-at-arms was despatched by the league under Carlo Malatesta to succour Mantua *.

This city was in extreme peril, for all the Milanese soldiers of Lombardy had assembled against it directed by the best generals and the determined hatred and talents of Gian-Galeazzo himself. He ordered two armies to invest it; one under Ugolotto Bianciardo governor of Verona; the other commanded by Jacomo del Verme lay south of the Po, intending to pass that river near Borgo Forte where the allies, but principally Florence, had built a strong and well-defended bridge four hundred and fifty paces in length at the enormous cost of 100,000 florins †. Both these armies were ordered to penetrate into that portion of Gonzaga's dominions called the "*Serraglio*" of Mantua from its inclosure by the Po, Mincio, and Oglio rivers, all of which being difficult to pass had hitherto preserved it from the ravages of war.

For upwards of three months the Milanese armies had been baffled by these obstacles and all navigation was stopped by the bridge of Borgo Forte; at length on the fourteenth of July Jacopo del Verme after an obstinate conflict, but favoured by a strong wind and current succeeded in destroying the bridge by fire-ships, and thus opening a free passage into the Serraglio of Mantua reduced Gonzaga to extremity ‡. This misfortune was soon compensated by his cousin Charles Malatesta's arrival, who with the allied succours brought fresh spirit, confidence, and immediate victory; for crossing the Po at Stellata near Ferrara, accompanied by a powerful squadron amongst which were seven Venetian galleys commanded by Francesco Bembo,

* Memorie Storiche di Ser Naddo da Montecatini, p. 159.—Leon. Aretino, Lib. xi.—Poggio Bracciolini, Lib. iii°, p. 87.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xvi., pp. 856 to 863.

† Goro Dati, Lib. iv., p. 46.

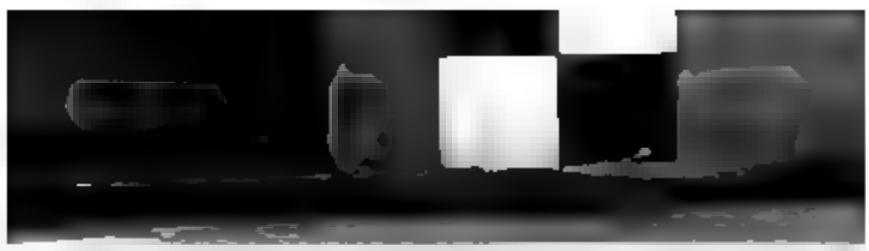
‡ S. Ammirato, Lib. xvi., p. 863.—Poggio, Stor. Lib. iii., p. 88.—Sismondi, vol. v., cap. lv.—Muratori, Anno 1397.

he attacked the Milanese flotilla near Governolo at the Mincio's mouth, sank or destroyed them all and passed that river while Del Verme, fearful of his communications by the destruction of a pontoon bridge was in full retreat across the Po; and by a final movement cut off all the baggage and infantry along with a great body of horse.

Meanwhile Gonzaga in concert with the garrison of Governola had attacked and defeated Biancardo on the left bank of the Mincio; and thus three important victories were gained in one day and the country completely cleared of the enemy. Bembo soon destroyed the Milanese bridge, and captured a hundred and seventy vessels at anchor above it; there were six thousand prisoners and two thousand horses taken on this memorable occasion, but the success was not followed up; for the condottieri of that day knew well how to impede the sudden termination of a war that supported them in credit and affluence; nevertheless peace was again talked of *. Galeazzo however was not so easily tamed; Alberigo da Barbiano and almost all his troops were recalled from Tuscany; new levies were made; the Milanese flotilla was replaced and augmented; and that of Padua and Mantua attacked and destroyed at Borgoforte on the twenty-ninth of October with the loss of three galleys twenty-five galleons, and all the crews and armament. Alberigo then entered the Serraglio, ravaged the whole country, overcame every obstacle, and carried desolation to the gates of Mantua.

The condition of Gonzaga was now worse than ever and the fears of Venice and Florence so augmented as to make the former speak openly of joining the league while the latter endeavoured to engage the Duke of Austria in her service. The prospect of having these potent antagonists startled Galeazzo and inclined him to negotiate, while Gonzaga tired of such destructive warfare was so eager for its termination as to begin a secret

* Ricordi di Gio. Morelli, p. 5.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xvi., p. 863.

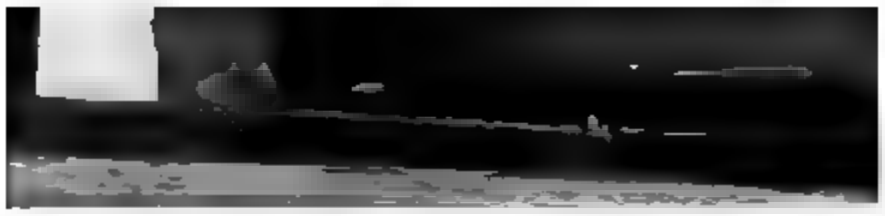


correspondence with his most hated enemy. But Visconte was in no haste; his object was procrastination not peace, and he therefore threw so many obstacles in the way that it was not until six months were passed, and after Venice had openly joined the league, that a truce for ten years was concluded principally through her mediation, and published on the twenty-sixth of May 1398*.

Gian-Galeazzo Visconte inherited the family disposition to make and break treaties either openly or covertly as best suited his own purposes; Pisa therefore as a means to the conquest of Florence was now his main object; and while negotiations for peace were still in progress he pretended to dismiss Paulo Savello and other condottieri from his service and covertly despatched them to join the Tuscan army at Siena, of which republic he had received the absolute lordship. They had also another and more important duty to perform on their way: entering Pisa at night Paulo immediately repaired to Jacopo d' Appiano and in the duke's name demanded possession of the citadel with the fortresses of Cascina, Leghorn, and Piombino, as the only means of protecting that city against the Florentines. Appiano astonished, but too wary to be thus entrapped, professed his devotion to Galeazzo and begged time until next morning to consult the Anziani without whose concurrence he had not power to comply. Paulo knew this to be false but acquiesced, and quitted him with significant threats: Jacopo instantly ordered his son Gherardo whom he had made Captain of Pisa (for Vanni was dead,) to have all his troops in readiness by dawn of day for the attack of an enemy. These commands were so effectually executed that Paulo was beaten, wounded, and made prisoner, and his people dispersed. Florence hoped from this breach to draw beneficial consequences, and Lucca expected the same; ambassadors from all three states met on the occasion but in vain; for Appiano the

A.D. 1398.

* Muratori, Anno 1397-8.—S. Ammirato . 865.



bitter enemy of Florence was either persuaded or affected to be so, by Visconte's ambassador, that all had occurred without his knowledge and their alliance remained unbroken*.

Autumn brought new troubles, for Jacopo d'Appiano died on the fifth of September his son Gherardo quietly succeeding; but this young man preferring ease and tranquillity to the troubles of a turbulent dominion and fearful alike of Florence Visconte and his own citizens, sold Pisa to that duke for 200,000 florins in despite of all the offers and remonstrances of the other two, the Pisans offering as much as Galeazzo for their entire emancipation. Gherardo retained the independent lordship of Piombino, Elba, Populonia, Suvereto, and Scarlino, all which as the Principality of Piombino remained two centuries in his family, but is now annexed to the Grand Duchy of Tuscany†. This was a fearful stroke of Galeazzo's policy, and coupled with all his other influence in Tuscany gave ample cause of alarm, for Florence remained almost alone an oasis of liberty in the great Italian desert! Genoa, Siena, Pisa and Perugia were all ruled by tyrants, while Bologna and Lucca were convulsed by civil discord which was fast bringing them to ruin · Rome languished in vice and slavery; Venice, never free, took little interest in the common fate of Italy; Naples had long bid adieu to peace and freedom; Lombardy was one great swamp of despotism threatening the few firm islands that still impeded its expansion; and even Europe itself seemed to be threatened with general misfortune.

A.D. 1399.

Bajazet menaced all Christendom with his arms; Constantinople was almost in his grasp; Tamerlane was behind him in the distance meditating the conquest of the world; most of the European sovereigns were weak, mad, or foolish; a schism in

* S. Ammirato, Lib. xvi., p. 865. — Tronci, vol. iv., p. 172.—Muratori, Anno 1398.

† S. Ammirato, Lib. xvi., p. 870 — Muratori, Anno 1399.—Tronci, vol. iv., p. 178.

the church still shook the devotion of the pious, and pestilence swept fearfully over the face of Italy!

At this moment a Scotch, Spanish, or Provençal priest began to preach repentance in the west: his auditors clothed and hooded in white, and carrying a crucifix in their front marched in procession to the nearest city chanting the beautiful hymn "*Stabat Mater dolorosa*" which was then composed, and asking mercy for their sins*. They were called the "*White Penitents*" and came to Italy through Piedmont, then proceeding to the coast, were joined by the inhabitants of Polsevera who entered Genoa in July to the number of five thousand of every rank age and sex, all dressed in white linen and chanting the "Stabat Mater" and other hymns: the Genoese then took up the pilgrimage and spent nine days in visiting the sacred places of their city, but the strongest marched onward to Lucca, Pisa, and thence to Florence where true to their wonted enthusiasm forty thousand Florentines with the two bishops at their head assumed the garb and carried this mania to Arezzo. There was no inebriety or other misconduct known amongst them; fasting, abstinence, prayers and peacemaking were their occupations for nine days: they entered no house, visited no convent, sought no shelter; but slept on the bare ground in the open air, and passed with confidence into the cities of their greatest enemies. What food was given to them they received, and distributed the overplus amongst the poor: a spirit of peace and good-will seemed to attend their steps and infuse itself into the souls of those they visited: this enthusiasm was so deep and universal, that the loudest revilers were carried off in the general feeling, and thus a gentle zephyr seemed to pass over the face of the world for a few short moments, but was felt no more! The storm of human passions again resumed its wonted course†.

* Bonmsegni, Hist. Fior., Lib. iv., p. 752.— Muratori, Annali, Anno 1399.

† Leon. Aretino, Lib. xii.—Buonaccorso Pitti, Cronica, p. 58.—Ricordi di Gio. Morelli, p. 6 —Poggio, Lib. iii°, p. 92.—Muratori, Anno 1399. — S. Ammirato, Lib. xvi., p. 872.—Sismondi, vol. v., cap. lvi.

The new year and century opened inauspiciously for Flo-
A.D. 1400. rence: Galeazzo's intrigues were ceaseless; and being secure of Siena, in the absolute sovereignty of which he had been again confirmed; of Pisa which he had just purchased; of the Counts of Poppi and other mountain barons; he turned his mind on Perugia, and through the agency of its mercenary tyrant Ceccolino de' Michelotti reduced that city also under his dominion. His next object was Lucca where Lazzero Guinigi still domineered: this man had a foolish brother, a soldier, who being about this time at Pisa was sent for by Visconte's governor and secretly told that if he had sufficient spirit he might become seignor of Lucca. "You have "only to demand a private audience of your brother by night, "which will not be refused, and when alone stab him to the "heart, proclaim yourself lord of the republic and you shall "not be long without assistance." This detestable advice was blindly followed, but the gonfaloner Michele Guinigi promptly arrested the culprit, who knew not how to proceed, and condemned him by the usual course of law.

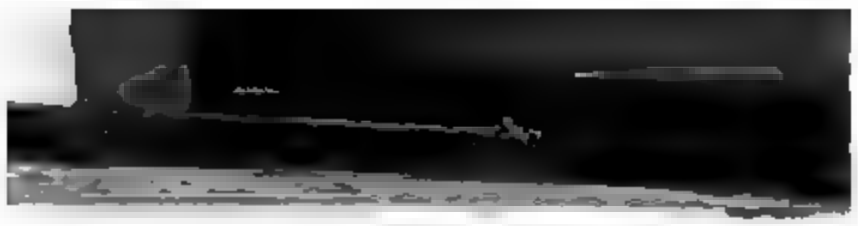
This obstacle being removed from Visconte the suspicious Florentines who never lost an opportunity of interfering in their neighbours' concerns, sent an offer of immediate assistance which was coolly declined; and soon after Paulo Guinigi, a partisan of Galeazzo, with his secret aid made himself lord of the commonwealth and added one more state to the greatest enemy of Florence. Nor was this republic better pleased at the conduct of Venice in concluding a general peace with Visconte on the twenty-first of March without the concurrence or even the knowledge of the Florentines but which by the conditions of her league she had a right to do: the latter thought with some reason, that their interests had been sacrificed yet accepted the treaty which was published without rejoicing on the eleventh of April 1400 after some strong but ineffectual remonstrances*. This mortifying event was aggravated by the

* Buonaccorso Pitti, Cron.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xvi., p. 876.

appearance of a pestilence which now began to rage with extreme violence over all Italy and in Florence alone daily carried off two hundred souls; so that with the number of those who had fled from its ravages the city on its great and usually crowded festival of San Giovanni seemed like a silent desert instead of its wonted display of mirth, and joy, and proud exulting magnificence. The shops were mostly closed; the streets unthronged and silent; the windows and balconies unpeopled and unadorned; the markets deserted; the churches with more priests than penitents; the public palace desolate, and the government alarmed for the general safety. Soldiers were therefore levied to protect the city and contado and remained until September and October, when the country was relieved from this oft-repeated and dreadful scourge of the Italian peninsula *.

This same year, Robert elector of Bavaria succeeded the deposed Wenceslas in the imperial dignity and immediately despatched ambassadors to assure Florence of his good will, confirming her privileges and making that state his vicar over all the imperial possessions within her own dominion. A.D. 1401. The arrival of this embassy was very acceptable to the Florentines, who seeing no safety but in war were again preparing for it: Buonaccorso Pitti, who had visited all countries and spoke all languages, and Ser Pero da Sanminiato, were therefore despatched to Robert, nominally as a mere ceremony on his election but really to invite him into Italy, as well for his coronation as to assert the imperial rights against Milan which if he consented to attack with a large force, 100,000 florins were to be his reward †. This was subsequently doubled; and after much unnecessary delay and higgling impolitic negotiations, all minutely related by Buonaccorso Pitti in his interesting Chronicle, Robert appeared at Trent in the middle of October with an army of fifteen thou-

* S. Ammirato, Lib. xvi., p. 877. † Buonaccorso Pitti, Cronica, p. 60, &c.



sand horse, where he was soon joined by Francesco da Carrara and a large reenforcement of all arms. The hopes of Florence, although raised by this movement, had already received a check from the state of factions and recent revolution at Bologna, where Giovanni Bentivoglio a young nobleman of great influence and popularity, had with the assistance of Galeazzo and public favour made himself lord of that city; yet not for this was he inclined to favour the duke of Milan but on the contrary drew closer the ancient ties of amity with Florence *.

All these things could not escape the lynx-eyed Galeazzo whose first means of defence were an attempt to poison the emperor by bribing his physician with 15,000 ducats to commit the crime; his next was an extraordinary tax of 600,000 florins by which he levied an army of thirteen thousand five hundred men-at-arms and twelve thousand infantry under the most renowned captains of the age, every one of them having separately commanded armies. Alberigo da Barbiano, Facino Cane, Otto Buonterzo of Parma, Galeazzo of Mantua, Taddeo del Verme, Galeazzo and Antonio Porro of Milan, Ugolotto Bianciardo, the Marquis of Monteferrato, and Carlo Malatesta of Rimini, all were commanded by Jacopo del Verme but each leading a separate division. Besides this he had garrisoned and supplied his frontier towns, strengthened his other cities, augmented his generals' pay, seduced both Mantua and Ferrara from the league; and attempted, but unsuccessfully, an alliance with the sovereign pontiff.

A.D. 1401.

On the side of Florence it was settled that the Dukes of Saxony and Austria were to command the two divisons of high and low Germany; and Francesco da Carrara all the Italian troops with whom he led the general march towards the Brescian hills, Robert intending to follow with his personal escort. The whole army reassembled within a few miles of

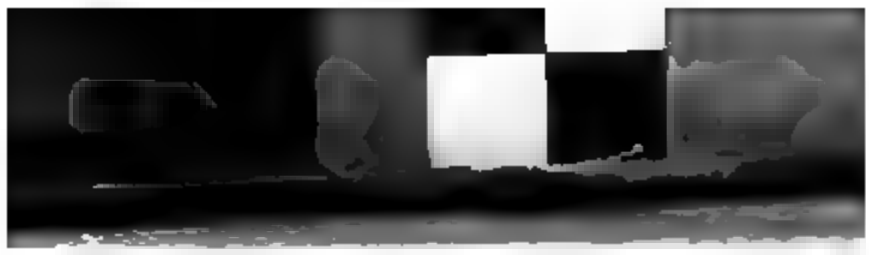
* S. Ammirato, Lib. xvi., p. 883.

Brescia and while debating on the plan of operations a skirmish commenced between Milanese Italians and the German imperialists, which ended in a more extensive and general combat: the Germans confiding in their ancient superiority fought boldly but disorderly; they were generally worse armed than the Italians; many with only a helmet and light cuirass which did not allow of a regular course with the lance in rest; so that they cast their spears with a thong like javelins; and their bridles were so light as to be only good for speed and common management. The Italian on the contrary was one mass of iron with a heavy tilting-lance and a powerful bit that stopped or turned his horse at speed, and now proved himself to the world's surprise in every way superior to his German adversary. The military spirit and discipline of Italy was revived and active; Hawkwood had trained her in the art of war and she no longer depended exclusively on foreigners for her internal battles*. The Germans were defeated and driven to their entrenchments with disgrace and death, and so great was the panic that within three days, either from this or other causes, the Archbishop of Cologne and the Duke of Austria left the army on some slight excuse and retired to Germany. Thus vanished all hope of this grand armament, and with it the expectations of Padua, Florence, and others who were promised riches from Visconte's spoils: Robert retired to Trent and was on the point of repassing the Alps when the earnest entreaties of Carrara and the Florentine ambassadors, with some sense of his own honour, recalled him and four thousand horse to Padua†.

The intelligence of this unexpected calamity spread consternation through Florence, for the present disappointment was equal to the previous animation of the citizens when in one single night 200,000 florins were voluntarily raised and sent off to Venice in readiness for the emperor‡. Now all was

* Leon. Aretino, Lib. xii., p. 209. † S. Ammirato, Lib. xvi., p. 885.
‡ Poggio, Lib. iii., p. 94.

changed; the last days of Florentine liberty were believed to be near and the state all but trampled under the footsteps of Visconte's legions! The citizens stared in silence on each other and all was gloom until the emperor's return to Padua became known, when courage again revived and ambassadors were once more sent to treat with him: but Florence required service for her money, while Robert insisted that the latter was necessary first, and in large quantities to produce the former; thus the dispute continued until April 1402, when with con-
A.D. 1402. siderable payments the emperor returned to Germany. Meanwhile Visconte proud of his success immediately attacked Bologna, almost the only outlet now left for Florentine commerce except Motrone near Pietra Santa, knowing that once in possession of that bulwark Florence would soon fall an easy prey. Bernardone della Serra with the whole disposable force of the republic was immediately despatched to Bentivoglio's assistance and would probably have preserved the town until Visconte's resources, which the Florentines well knew were exhausted, but the rash spirit of the latter lost everything. Forcing Bernardone out against his will to fight a superior force, a bloody battle ensued, the Florentines were completely defeated, their general made prisoner, Bologna was taken by force and treachery, and Giovanni Bentivoglio fell in its defence. Florence deprived of her general and army was now open to the enemy: her last hour was come if Visconte had only pushed on his conquests; but he offered peace as was his wont after any great success; and ambassadors met at Venice from both sides to settle the conditions. It was on unequal terms for Florence who with her army destroyed, her general prisoner, her resources exhausted; no hope, no chance of a defender; no means of foreign aid; the Cancellieri in open revolt at Pistoia and the Ubaldini in the Apennines, had great difficulties. Yet three friendly states offered themselves to her consideration, Venice, Naples, and the Church: but the

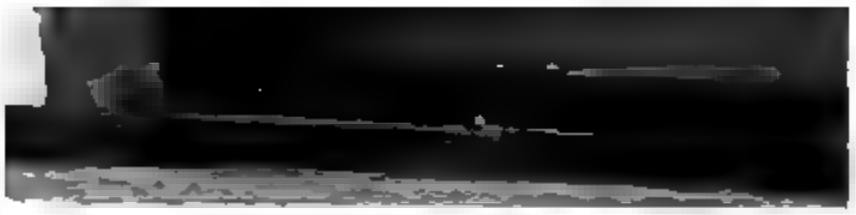


terms of Venice were too hard, too mercenary, and too degrading to Florence; and her fidelity was not to be trusted: Ladislaus was young, warlike, and eager for glory but faithless and unscrupulous and therefore a dangerous auxiliary: the pope alone remained; and as it was thought his own interest would lead him to right conclusions every endeavour was exerted to secure his assistance.

In the midst of all this terror, intelligence arrived that Gian-Galeazzo Visconte was dead of the plague at his villa of Marignano on the Ambro! Instantly the psalm, "*Our bonds are broken and we are now free*" resounded through the streets, and an indescribable delight filled the hearts of the community: Florence was saved and the people felt it and rejoiced! Giovanni Galeazzo Visconte died on the third of September at the age of fifty-five, after having for twelve years of mingled peace and war tormented the Florentines who however are not quite free from the imputation of having poisoned him.

He loved retirement, was liberal to clever men, an encourager of the arts, and was says Poggio and Muratori of a great and sagacious mind; magnanimous, clement; and glorious in the eyes of the world from his success. His ability and sagacity were palpable, but his magnanimity and clemency arose rather from his being unsusceptible to anger or resentment than any nobler feeling: all with him was calculation, and neither blood, friendship, gratitude, religion, justice, or conscience, ever impeded his designs. Ambition was his all-absorbing passion and the conquest of Italy his ultimate object. Like Mastino della Scala it is said that he caused a royal crown to be made for his future dignity; and when he heard of a comet appearing while he was ill, it was received by him as the sign of his dissolution and he thanked God for making the symbol of his recall an object in the heavens to be seen by all the world*.

* Cagnola Stor. Mil., Lib. ii°, p. 22. Ammirato, Lib. xvi., p. 881, &c°.—Corio. Stor. Mil., Parte iv°.—S. Poggio, Storia, Lib. iii°.—Leon. Are-



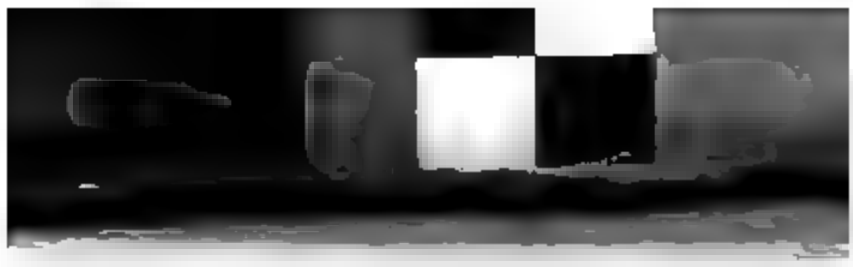
This preponderating weight being removed Italy righted of her own accord and a new series of events commenced with the century; similar passions exciting similar effects, names only are changed, and this is the burden of historical song; a thousand variations to the same tune but the cadence moving with unaltered beat*.

Although the course of military transactions has been uninterruptedly followed for twelve years it must not be supposed that the domestic affairs of Florence worked in perfect harmony, or were even less stormy than usual · on the contrary, dissensions, plots, exiles, admonitions, and confiscation of property filled up the intervals of external war with all their wonted activity.

We must take up the thread of our history from November
A.D. 1391. 1391 when the Alberti and Rinucini families were by the removal of the Divieto restored to the rights of citizenship and Florence remained free from civil broils until
A.D. 1393. September 1393 when Maso degli Albizzi became gonfalonier of justice: he was the son of Luca degli Albizzi and nephew of that Piero who lost his head in 1379. Besides the destruction of his property Maso had suffered all the hardships and misery of banishment for a plot of which Piero was generally believed innocent: in any circumstances such injustice would not have been easily forgiven or forgotten; but in that frowning age of passion and revenge the injury was treasured up with accumulated interest and a fresh and ardent recollection was preserved of his own and his family's sufferings. Piero's death alone had made Maso a determined enemy of the Alberti, nor did the fate of its principal author Benedetto in the least mitigate his thirst of vengeance. An

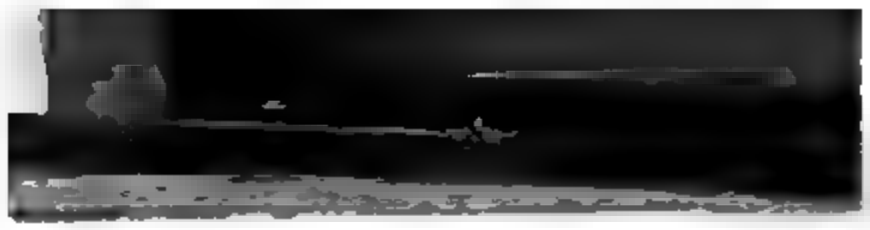
tino, Lib. xii., and last of his history. —Goro Dati Storia, Lib v.—Cronica di Jacopo Salviati.—Ricordi di Gio. Morelli.—Cronaca di Buonaccorso Pitti. —Muratori, Annali, Anno. 1402—Sismondi, vol. v., cap. lvi.

* We here take leave of Leonardo Aretino, whose account of all military transactions is always clear and probable.



opportunity was only wanting, and his accession to the chief magistracy furnished it: by means of two exiles a plot to overturn the government was revealed with all its particulars to the Seignory, which resulted in the arrest of Cipriano, Alberto and Nerozzo degli Alberti, with several others of that family who were said to be implicated. Benedetto was dead, but the vindictive spirit of faction never died, and Maso resolved to gratify it ere his term of office expired: by his influence a decree was immediately passed to place all the Alberti except the sons of Niccolaio amongst the "Grandi" and thus deprive them for ever of their privileges as Florentine citizens. This arbitrary proceeding convulsed the city; a parliament was instantly called and as usual a numerous Balìa of the ascendant faction appointed with ample powers to tranquillise the state. The task was rough and arduous, and on the twentieth of October this board of dictators prepared for work by appointing Francesco Gabrielli d'Agubbio as captain of the guard with more than the usual authority and retainers, in order to a prompt and decided execution of their decrees. The troops were simultaneously augmented, and additional power given to the Seignory to raise money by forced loans for their support. The names in the priors' election purse of 1387 were destroyed and replaced by surer partisans; the Seignory for November and December was ordered to be selected, not legally drawn by lot; and if in the gonfalonier's election purse any suspicious names appeared they were to be immediately cancelled and replaced by those of more devoted citizens. No less than three priors were to be drawn from the Borsellino; many payments due to public creditors were suspended for three years and the money appropriated to military expenses, and the podestà, who had refused to summon the Alberti before his tribunal for examination, was dismissed with all his court and followers.

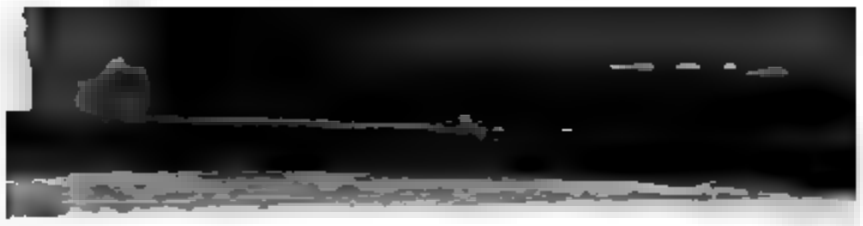
The people alarmed at such despotism and uncertain of the end, at once took to their arms; one faction to preserve what



they had already acquired; the other to repel worse treatment: the first hurried to the great square with loud shouts of "*Long live the people and the Party Guelph:*" the second after seizing a pennon with the people's arms at the captain's palace also thronged to the same spot with the antagonist war-cry of "*Long live the people and the Trades.*" But the former were strongest and after some bloodshed compelled all the latter who remained in the place to join their cry. The Seignory fearful of the result if a leader were found to direct the storm, immediately delivered the Guelphic standard to Rinaldo Gianfiglazzi and that of the people to Donato Acciaiuoli, both of them well beloved of the community, with orders to tranquillise the town. But the malcontents remembered the olden time and the days of Salvestro who boldly espoused their party when oppressed by powerful citizens; wherefore the weaker faction immediately repaired to the houses of Vieri and Michele de' Medici, the cousin and brother of Salvestro, the former since his death being considered chief of the family. These citizens were implored with all the energy of distressed supplicants to deliver them from Maso degli Albizzi and their present oppressions, as Salvestro had formerly delivered them from the tyranny of his uncle, unless they themselves wished to be ruined and persecuted like the Alberti. "Take," said they, "take boldly the people's banner; and those "who now follow Donato and Rinaldo will soon join the Medici "their present and ancient deliverers." But Vieri, to whom their supplications were almost wholly addressed, had Salvestro's example before him and all its melancholy consequences: and whether from this, a want of all ambition, or absence of generosity in taking the part of the oppressed; or from an honest and patriotic spirit that perceived more evil in the remedy than the disease, was deaf to all their entreaties. It seems to have been the general opinion at the time that if he had been more ambitious than honest he might at that moment

have easily made himself sovereign ruler of Florence, so bent were the minds of the people on having a chief, no matter at what sacrifice, who would deliver them from oppression and lead on to vengeance.

The lower classes, who had never forgotten and still felt the lawless hand of power, eagerly searched for a vindicator; and whoever might be found, provided he were only able to control their actual oppressors no matter how wicked he should prove, they were ready to salute as their deliverer even at the expense of liberty, that fruitful field for the labours of seditious men. Thus the road was paved for usurpation with a gradual and insensible relinquishment of all but the outward form of constitutional freedom. Nor did Vieri lack advisers and prompters to the work; amongst others Antonio de' Medici, who from having been his enemy had become most intimate, urged him strongly to assume the government, but received this spirited reply. "*When you were my enemy Antonio, your threats inspired* "*no fear, and now you are my friend your council shall do* "*me no evil.*" Then addressing the multitude he promised to be their advocate if they would listen to his advice, but not their leader; and proceeding along with them to the palace he spoke earnestly for them, cleared himself of all suspicion, and persuaded the crowd to retire quietly. Determined to secure themselves from future danger the priors lost no time in fortifying the great square and guarding it with six hundred infantry and two hundred Genoese crossbow-men; besides these two thousand chosen citizens of their own party were armed and clothed alike to be ready on any emergency; a regular guard-house was appointed for the rendezvous of every civic company in case of need, and several other regulations all tending to keep down sedition and preserve power were promulgated. To all save these, the use of arms was forbidden. The Balià was then augmented with the addition of many more citizens in order to increase its force and stability by



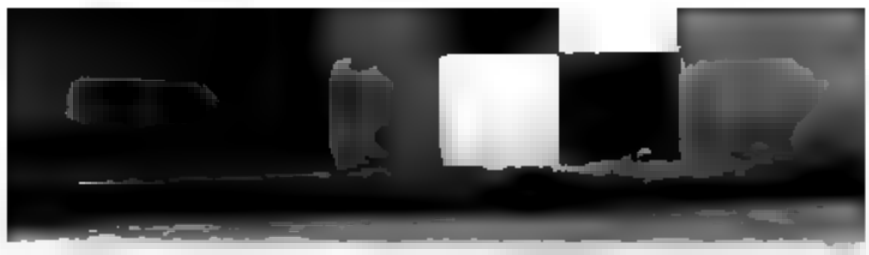
extending its base; and thus strengthened a decree was passed on the twenty-fourth of October for the banishment of Cipriano, Alberto, Nerozzo, Piero, and Giovanni degli Alberti besides several others; respectively to Rhodes, Brussels, Barcelona, and Sardinia. many of inferior note who had been most active in the sedition were executed; others exiled, fined, or imprisoned; and nominally to give more dignity to the chief magistrate, but really to get rid of many obnoxious persons for whose dismissal there was no legal cause, none under forty-five years old could thenceforth be gonfalonier of justice. Other severe laws were promulgated to secure the ascendant faction under the name of public government, odious even to many good citizens of their own party who deemed that state insecure which required such violence to uphold it.

A.D. 1394.

Those of the Alberti who remained were indignant; the Medici, and especially Vieri who felt that his honour had suffered in the opinion of a people whom he had induced to submit were no less angry; and one of the first who had spirit to step forward was Donato Acciaioli a man rather superior to than a companion of Maso's, who nevertheless from having carried everything with so high a hand and so successfully while in office, was become chief of the republic *. Many of the ancient nobles were now placed among the popolani to increase their ranks and diminish the number of malcontents of which the old aristocracy always formed a considerable portion; and to show the extreme jealousy of faction Rinaldo Gianfigiazzi one of the most illustrious and popular of citizens who had joined in the banishment of the Alberti, now nearly lost himself by promising his son and daughter in marriage to two members of that devoted race.

Great murmurs ran through the ascendant faction at this apparent desertion, and Rinaldo was finally summoned before

* Gio. Morelli, Ricordi, p. 4.—N. Macchiavelli, Lib. iii°.—Gio. Michele Bru'o, Stor. Fior., Lib. i°.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xvi., p. 840.

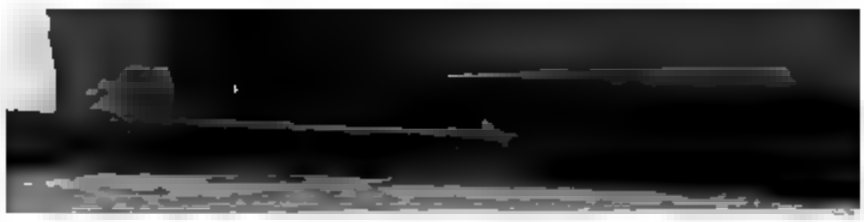


the public tribunal of the Otto della Guardia, severely reprimanded for his conduct and threatened to be inscribed on the public books as a disaffected man if these marriages were allowed to proceed. He with the utmost reverence and humility excused himself by declaring that he had no intention of quitting his party; that he never contemplated any harm in marrying his children to citizens who had committed no crime against the state; whom the state had not exiled, or deprived of office, or placed amongst the great, or in any way punished; but that the marriages should be broken off. In consequence of this he was released, and after a few years his daughter's marriage took place owing principally to her own fidelity. Such was the boasted liberty of the Florentine republic! *.

Donato Acciaioli perhaps the most powerful and generally esteemed citizen of Florence, is described as one of those who could not sit down in the tranquil enjoyment of his own prosperity while his fellow-citizens were wailing in hopeless misery. Indignant at the rigorous administration of his party and its abuse of power, he had been long contemplating a change, and only waited for his chance of office to restore the numerous exiles, or at least re-enfranchise the less culpable admonished citizens who still resided in the capital. He therefore began whispering his intentions about amongst the people as the only certain means of restoring public tranquillity: but tired of waiting for the chance of official power he chose the more dangerous way; and relying on the support of those numerous friends to whom his opinions were already known, seized the moment when his kinsman Michele Acciaiolo and his friend Niccolo Ricoveri were priors, to carry his thoughts into execution. They accordingly at his request proposed a law for the restoration of the exiled and admonished; but the Seignory decided that where good was doubtful and danger certain new schemes ought never to be attempted, and certainly should not

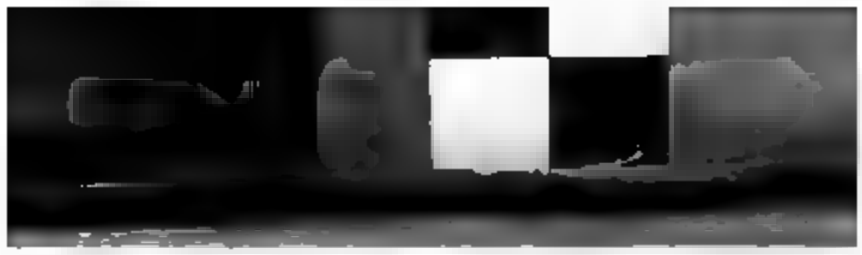
A.D. 1396.

* S. Ammirato, Lib. xvi., p. 843.



during the continuance of their magistracy. Failing in this and other attempts Donato became angry and sent them a haughty message for he was a very powerful chief of their own faction; that what they refused to do with the gown should be accomplished by the sword. This bold defiance was answered by a citation to appear before their tribunal, and after a minute examination by a committee expressly appointed and composed of almost all the leaders of this faction including Donato himself, he was convicted of a secret attempt at revolution and banished for twenty years. He did not fall alone; for his cause was so closely connected with a multitude of inferior citizens, but still men of power and influence, that in order to punish them with more security it became necessary to make a previous example of a man whose high rank and authority might otherwise have exempted him from danger. His ruin therefore, to which he submitted without a murmur, pulled down Alamanno the son of Salvestro de' Medici; two Antonios of the same family; all the descendants of Alamanno, Salvestro's father, with many plebeians besides two of the devoted Alberti who were severely fined*. Maso degli Albizzi had now ruled the commonwealth for nearly two years and a half, and had filled the city with malcontents, while the rest of Italy was swarming with angry exiles ready for any enterprise that promised to restore them to their country. His government was an oligarchy comprised, now that Acciaioli was in exile, of the following citizens who managed to share all the great offices of state and foreign embassies amongst themselves and their friends. The leader was Maso; then came Filippo Corsini, Andrea Vettòri, Gianozzo Biliotti, Nofri Arnolfi, Rinieri Peruzzi, Lionardo dell' Antella, Rinaldo Gianfigliazzi, Francesco Rucellai, Bartolommeo Valori, Francesco Fioravanti, Andrea Minerbetti, Guido del Palagio, Forese Salviati, Lorenzo

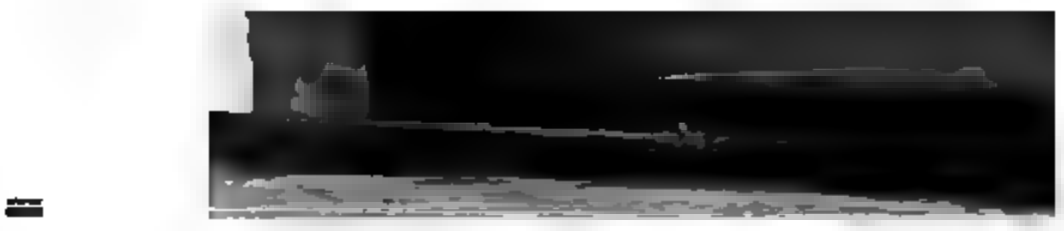
* Mem. Storiche di Ser Naddo, p. 153.—Macchiavelli, Lib. iii°.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xvi., p. 880.



Ridolfi, and Michele and Lotto Castellani. Power so condensed and concealed behind the wide-spreading forms of liberty was formidable, but so completely was it deemed to be in Maso's hands that his death like Cæsar's, as was as vainly believed, would set the country free.

About this time amongst the exiles at Bologna were Picchio Cavicciulli, Tommaso de' Ricci, Antonio de' Medici and five others all high-spirited young men ready to face any danger that involved a hope of ultimate victory. These desperadoes were invited to Florence by Piggiello and Baroccio Cavicciuli with other kinsmen; all of them admonished and therefore discontented citizens; and offered secure concealment whence they might issue at the proper moment, assassinate Maso degli Albizzi, call the people to arms and rouse the whole city to revolt. Success was confidently predicted from the universal dissatisfaction, and they would be seconded as was affirmed by the Ricci, Adimari, Medici, Manelli, and many others who were disgusted with the existing government. Tempted by such representations which were partially correct, the eight conspirators entered Florence on the fourth of August, safely reached their concealment and set a watch on Albizzi's motions, intending to make his death the signal of revolt. Ere long they heard that he had gone into an apothecary's shop near San Piero Maggiore: they instantly sallied forth but arrived too late; he had already departed: nothing daunted they hurried on towards Mercato Vecchio, where meeting Giovanni di Piero one of the adverse party, immediately killed him and at the same time attempted to excite the citizens by loud and repeated cries of "*People, People, Arms; Liberty; Death to the Tyrants.*" Turning towards Mercato Nuovo a second adversary was stricken down at the termination of that street called the Calamala; but no man joined them: finally stopping in the Corso degli Adimari at a Loggia or Portico called the Nighittosa, now no longer in existence; they harangued the mul-

A.D. 1397.



titude which had collected more from curiosity than any notion of sudden insurrection; endeavouring by a vehement oration to rouse their dormant spirit and free themselves by one bold effort from a debasing servitude. They declared that the cries and suffering of their fellow-citizens far more than any personal wrong, had moved them to the enterprise: that the people had often prayed for chiefs to lead them on to freedom, and had vainly implored Vieri de' Medici to espouse their cause; but that now they had no less than eight resolute leaders, and amongst them two of that very family, all ready and willing to show them the way to victory; and still they stood unmoved, staring in stupid silence at each other and delaying, until their liberators should be overcome and their own slavery still more firmly rivetted! They who were ever wont to fly to arms on the slightest injury, were now stiff and motionless under an accumulation of the heaviest wrongs that a free-born people could possibly endure! Would they still suffer so many fellow-citizens to languish in exile, so many to be admonished; when it was in their power to restore the one and the other to their rights and country? The truth of this address was felt, but not sufficiently to create an instantaneous revolt against so powerful a government, and the unnecessary murder of two unoffending citizens told badly for the cause.

Perceiving the hopelessness of their efforts the conspirators took shelter in the cathedral rather to defer than escape from a death that was now inevitable, as the people seemed bent on meekly suffering their disgraceful servitude. Meanwhile the priors uncertain of what was doing armed the palace, but on learning the truth surrounded and forced open the church where most if not all were taken alive and others are said to have died bravely defending themselves. There were no accomplices but those who had given them shelter, and they were executed along with the survivors of this daring, rash, and inconsiderate enterprise.

This incident, individually trifling, serves at least to show the violence, the oppression, the destructive character of the time, when constitutions vibrated between licence and slavery, crossing real liberty as a useless mark; and when on so slender a foundation men of high rank and family were easily and unhesitatingly led to attempt so desperate a game against so powerful an administration*.

A comparative tranquillity of three years under the energetic rule of Albizzi was finally interrupted by another conspiracy of a graver character in its objects and consequences, because it was contrived and pursued under the auspices of Visconte and implicated a number of the most illustrious families. For this enterprise Galeazzo employed the multitude of Florentine exiles then in Lombardy as his most willing and effectual instruments to work on a large and powerful body of malcontents within the city who were engaged to second their attempts. On a given day from certain places in the neighbourhood a numerous band of well-armed exiles were to enter Florence by the Arno and joining their friends within kill all the chiefs of the predominant faction and reform the state at their pleasure. But conspiracies says Macchiavelli, are generally composed of too few or too many: if too few they are insufficient; if too many they are betrayed. Amongst the internal plotters was Samminiato de' Ricci who in seeking additional support, incautiously stumbled on an accuser in the person of Salvestro Cavicciuli degli Alamanneschi whose own wrongs and those of his kinsmen naturally indicated as a sure and faithful coadjutor. But whether conscientiously, according to Ammirato, or from the greater force of present terror over distant and uncertain hope as Macchiavelli asserts, he revealed the plot: Samminiato was arrested and the whole combination unfolded. Salvestro made no stipulation for his friend's life,

A.D. 1460.

* Mem. Stor. di Ser Naddo, p. 167.—N. Macchiavelli, Lib. iii°.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xvi., p. 860.

and afterwards received a reward for his patriotism; but all the other conspirators had the good fortune to escape except one, who was executed along with Samminiato de' Ricci.

A Balià of ninety citizens was immediately created and the suspected persons were punished by condemnation to banishment and admonition: six of the Ricci, six of the Alberti, two of the Medici, two of the Strozzi, three of the Scali, Bindo Altoviti, Bernardo Adimari, with numbers of the lower classes, were declared rebels and the whole families of Alberti, Ricci, and Medici were admonished for ten years*. But the doomed Alberti were still considered too formidable for the dominant faction, and a decree soon after passed to banish all the males of that family above sixteen years of age lest the state should be endangered by their presence in the capital†. In the year 1412 they broke their confines; a new Balià was created against them, which in persecuting this unlucky race with all the influence of government and virulence of faction, did not neglect by new and stringent laws to strengthen and consolidate its already despotic authority.

A.D. 1401.

With the Alberti's ruin we may virtually bid adieu to Florentine liberty, circumscribed as it was and dressed in the delusive and flattering garb of a republic: it was at best never or rarely more than the freedom, or rather the license of a class; a large class; but still only a portion of the common family. The nobles, the lower orders, and the powerless citizens, were ever discontented but never united and therefore always more or less oppressed, the faction in power alone being free. It was moreover a liberty of governing, an eligibility to place, power, emolument; not that of living in the unmolested enjoyment and security of goods and person; not civil liberty as now understood; but still in unison with the opinions of that age and country. Yet it must not be despised, for the theory

* S. Ammirato, Lib xvi., p. 879.—Macchiavelli, Lib. iii°.
† Macchiavelli, Lib. iii°.

though infantile, was still good; it was the day-spring of modern freedom, and like the star of Bethlehem proclaimed the coming of a milder age. Henceforth we shall see under various phases only a well-concealed despotism; first of the Albizzi and then of the Medici; but perhaps if impartially examined, attended until the final ruin of the republic, with a less brilliant exterior, but a more widely-spread mass of individual happiness and general comfort because it was necessary to work in the name and forms of freedom long after the substance was decayed. There was moreover a strong belief in existing liberty on one side; and a certain reverence for ancient institutions on both that concealed the pliant fingers of the sceptred citizens, who also had the sense to hide their state beneath the civic gown and a social equality of communion with their countrymen.

A.D. 1402.

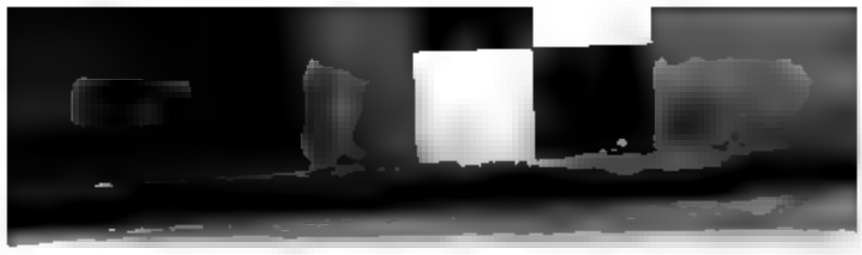
COTEMPORARY MONARCHS.—England: Richard II. until 1399; then Henry IV. of Lancaster.—Scotland: Robert III., Stuart, from 1390 to 1405.—France: Charles VI. (The Maniac).—Castile and Leon: John I. to 1390; then Henry III.—Aragon: John I. to 1395; then Martin V.—Portugal: John I.—Naples: Ladislaus of Durazzo.—Sicily: Martin the Younger and Maria.—True Pope: Boniface IX.—Antipope: Clement VII. until 1394; then Benedict XIII.—Germany: Wenceslas to 1400, then deposed and reigns in Bohemia till 1419; then Robert Count Palatine elected Emperor.—Hungary: Sigismond of Luxemburg.—Poland: Vladislas V. (Jagello) embraces Christianity.—Greek Emperor: John Palæologus until 1391; then Martin II.—Ottoman Empire: Bajazet Ilderim, (or the Lightning).—Tartary: Timur, or Tamerlane.

MISCELLANEOUS CHAPTER.

FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

THERE are certain moral precepts of general and everlasting application more commonly acknowledged than willingly obeyed yet holding a conspicuous place in every human transaction: their necessity is undenied; they form the theoretical standard of virtue in civilised society, receive an outward reverence from all, and are generally used as a convenient test of our neighbour's conduct and character whenever it becomes expedient to taunt him with their violation.

These laws, essentially attached to Christianity, shone with as clear a light in the middle ages as at present, but the human mind was not then so well fitted to receive them; they were rather used as a reprehension to others than as practical rules of individual conduct. In those times also, that enthusiasm excited by a succession of mysterious ceremonies miscalled religion became deep and frequent, while the sober pace of genuine morality moving with "pilgrim steps in amice grey," was comparatively circumscribed and unheeded. And even if natural impulse might in some have produced more lofty and practical virtues, universal example must soon have whirled them into the common vortex of licentiousness: accustomed from infancy to the companionship of Vice, the men of those days were blind to her naked deformities and only beheld her in the brilliant trappings of successful villany and mundane honour, with wealth, glory, and external reverence; nay even



in the very garb of virtue; and dazzled by this factitious splendour the world followed eagerly in her train. Success, no matter by what means or in what cause, from the turn of the die to a revolution of the state was then the great measure of worldly approbation*; the test of conduct, the salve of crime, the justification of injury. In this murky atmosphere the fiercer passions worked without fear or danger from religion conscience or morality, and by its obscurity alone ought men and nations in that age be judged, not through the clearer medium of our own.

When we thus regard Florence, she seems to shine with more genuine lustre than her peers, to exhibit a steadier light and milder aspect, and to offer a conjunction of liberty morality

* Dante opens the sixth Canto of his Purgatory with an illustration of the prevalent fawning on good fortune, in a striking simile.

" Quando si parte 'l giuoco della Zara,
Colui, che perde, si riman dolente,
Ripetendo le volte, e tristo impara:
Con l'altro se ne va tutta le gente:
Qual va dinanzi, e qual diretro 'l prende,
E qual da lato gli si reca a mente.
Ei non s'arresta, e questo e quello 'ntende:
A cui porge la man, più non fa pressa;
E così dalla calca si difende.
Tal'era io in quella turba spessa,
Volgendo a loro e qua e là la faccia,
E promettendo mi scioglieo da essa."

" When from a game of dice two players rise,
The loser still remains in doleful mood
Considering fruitless casts, and sadly learns:
With t'other moves th' expecting crowd away:
This one before and that behind him clings;
A third beside him cries, 'Forget not me.'
He makes no stay but lends an ear to each:
Those that receive his hand urge on no more,
And thus from pressing throngs defends himself.
Just such was I amongst that thickening crowd,
Turning to each, and here, and there, my face,
And promising, I loos'd myself from all."

and principle, coupled with those broad views of Italian politics that for a season fixed her as the cynosure of national independence. And though so frequently disturbed by internal heats she probably enjoyed as much, perhaps more tranquillity than most of the neighbouring republics; than Siena for instance; or Pisa, except under the Gambacorti; than Genoa Perugia or Bologna; all more or less tormented by ambitious citizens and political turpitude under the delusive name of liberty.

The austerity of her government, harsh as it was, yielded to that of Venice; and her liberty was greater, for aristocratic equality embraced a far wider circle, and though quite as strongly marked in character was made somewhat more palatable by the social denomination of fellow-citizen; nor were her magnates ever individually so powerful as those of the proud and princely Genoa. Her factions, as elsewhere, were still Guelph and Ghibeline and now equally removed from church and empire to the more limited but no less bloody field of domestic conflict.

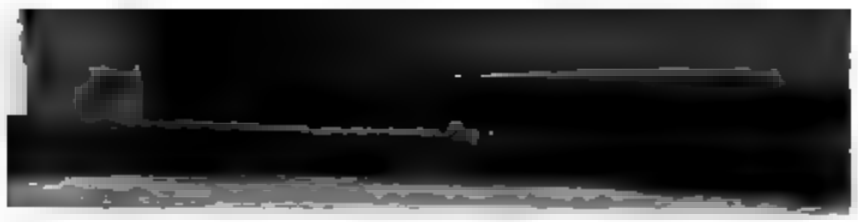
After Rodolph of Hapsburg's abandonment of Italy no permanent authority had been preserved there by the German emperors although their periodical visits were always costly, troublesome, and sometimes dangerous. The popes also had lost much by a similar cause: while revelling in luxury and licentiousness at Avignon they became at once the slaves of France and tyrants of Italy until her indignant states under native leaders shook off the yoke and achieved their freedom. Yet the popes still made war; feebly, doubtfully, uselessly, but always cruelly: too weak to conquer, too powerful to submit: they were deaf to the voice of compassion and proved an eternal scourge to the whole Italian peninsula. Albornoz did much, Poïet something to restore ecclesiastical dominion; but the indignation of Florence and papal oppressions soon stripped the church of every fief but Rimini. The whole world was taxed

to support these wars; vast sums were accumulated amongst the pious northern powers and squandered in the bowers of Avignon, while unpaid troops and rapacious legates plundered Italy, and warred and continued wars for their own personal gain.

During this confusion Florence being morally and physically, as it were the very heart of Italy, gave life and vigour to the nation: pursuing a bold energetic and generally successful policy when not spoiled in the execution, she stood forth the champion of native liberty, and preserving, at least the external grandeur and simplicity of a free people, became no mean study for the politician and philosopher, and often an example of that which internal union might at any time have made her, namely the most powerful and respected commonwealth of Italy. Good and evil were within her grasp, but the latter was generally chosen: as her very existence depended on trade, peace and independence were her real and legitimate objects of policy from which however she was frequently diverted by ambition, jealousy, and hatred of her neighbours.

A long-sighted sagacity arising from intimate acquaintance with the resources and policy of other states made her keenly sensible to the approach of danger and therefore an early and officious meddler in Italian politics: feared, hated, and envied by her neighbours, she was yet courted and employed, and often duped or sacrificed when her aid became unnecessary.

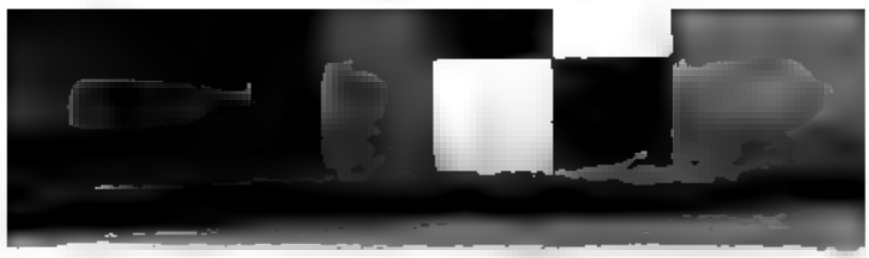
In what comfort or misery the great mass of Florentines lived, what influence their form of government and institutions had on the labouring classes either in town or country, how their moral and physical existence were affected, and what were their common enjoyments, are unfortunately the points least noticed by historians although they form perhaps the most useful and interesting portions of national history: but in those days the people were little thought of. The great and powerful were alone objects of attention amongst cotem-



porary writers, and poor men's condition whether as soldiers or peasantry, in war or common life, seems never to have been an object of historical interest and scarcely of reflection: hence much difficulty, nay almost an impossibility arises of gaining any satisfactory knowledge on a subject which is the only means of fairly appreciating the comparative usefulness of institutions like those of Florence.

We know that the city, and its immediate territory under the name of Contado, were governed by the same laws; and that almost all the after acquisitions, included in the general appellation of district, although subject to universal state regulations were ruled by the original statutes and decrees of their independent condition unless they clashed with the former; for Florence seldom attempted by the substitution of her own peculiar form of government to destroy native constitutions. Nor was there any legal inconvenience in this, for the broad frame-work of all Italian states was so analogous as to insure the easy movement of their various subordinate machinery, therefore little alteration was felt in the change.

That there must have been considerable suffering amongst the poor of Florence and its neighbourhood is evident from the complaints and turbulence of the working classes; from the repeated laws for encouraging agricultural settlers in the contado, so often desolated; and from the more direct authority of Villani who gives us an interesting though indistinct glimpse of the general mass of indigence. We are told by him that one of the inferior citizens died in 1330 leaving almost all his fortune to the Florentine poor; and to carry this will into effect his executors appointed a day and hour for their meetings in the principal church of each quarter to receive their several portions: it was thus found that more than seventeen thousand persons of every age and sex were in such distress as to have no scruple about receiving six danari each from this charity, without counting those greater sufferers of higher con-



dition who being ashamed to beg concealed their misery; or those in hospital, or prisoners, or religious mendicants; all of whom received a separate bequest of twelve danari each to the number of four thousand more. The Florentines then as now probably gave alms without much discrimination, and we know from Dante that beggars were as well acquainted with the usual tricks of their calling as in the present day. In the thirteenth Canto of his Purgatory we thus find them used as an illustration of his text.

"Così li ciechi, a cui la roba falla,
Stanno a' perdoni a chieder lor bisogna,
E l'uno 'l capo sovra l'altro avvalla,
Perchè in altrui pietà tosto si pogna,
Non pur per lo sonar delle parole,
Ma per la vista che non meno agogna"*.

This enormous mass of mendicity surprised the citizens; but it was not all Florentine: many beggars were attracted from the country, from districts beyond the state, and even from without the Tuscan confines to share the distribution, neither had the nation recovered from Castruccio's wars: but still we have in it sufficient proof of a vast mass of destitution throughout the republican territory †.

Although such distress indicates anything but a tender and wholesome action of government on the lower classes of society yet the Florentines were religiously, perhaps somewhat selfishly, addicted to indiscriminate alms-giving as well as to more useful modes of charity in the shape of hospitals and similar institutions; but continual wars, and the ravages of condottieri were a standing misfortune to rich and poor during the greater part of this century, for both suffered in person and property, independent

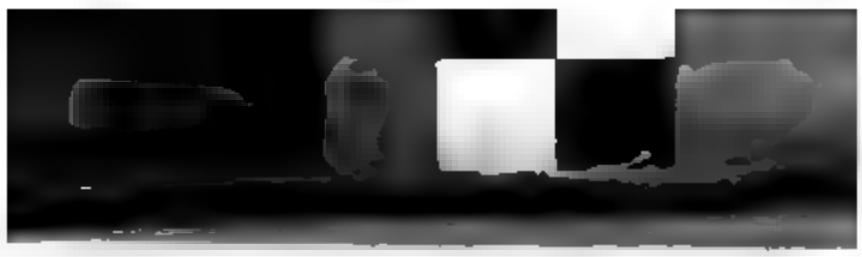
* "So those blind beggars that have lost their all,
Frequent the churches to supply their need;
And one his head reclines on t'other's breast
To raise compassion in the pious throng,
Not merely by the sound of piteous words,
But by the sight, which pains them equally."

† Gio. Villani, Lib. x., cap. clxii.

of the public contributions to satisfy those rapacious freebooters. Nevertheless Florence probably contained a greater number of wealthy citizens than any Italian state but Venice and Genoa, and riches were more equally spread over the whole community; indeed her fame for opulence was so notorious that higher ransoms were demanded for prisoners of that nation than any other, and finally occasioned such inconvenience as to deter many citizens from serving personally in war. But notwithstanding all this wealth there was a continual struggle between the public government and the citizens, especially the ladies of Florence about luxurious indulgence in dress and private entertainments. Grave fathers of families of whom the magistracy was chiefly composed disliked such expense; and the manners of official people seem to have been simple enough; for it was not until the latter end of this century that the gonfalonier and priors deemed it necessary to keep a regular cook at the public palace, and even sought an excuse for this luxury in the necessity they were frequently under of entertaining illustrious foreigners. At their private dinners we find that boiled partridges, a dish of tripe, and a plate of sardinias, were considered sufficiently handsome entertainment for the chief magistrate's common acquaintance *. Previous to this the official dinners of the Seignory were probably according to the usual custom, sent out partly or wholly, to be dressed; the bakers' ovens, as with the lower and many of the middle classes amongst ourselves, being substituted for home cookery; but confections of all kinds were still a settled portion of almost every meal, and even offered as refreshment to morning visitors.

Fortunes amongst the Florentines were necessarily diversified in amount, but about 6000 florins seems to have been considered handsome, and marriage portions varied from 300 to 2000 golden florins for girls of high rank; but marriage pre-

* S. Ammirato, Lib. xiii., p. 688.—F. Sacchetti, Novella 37.



sents were sometimes made of such value as to enter into the settlements, and were not unfrequently deducted from the dower if through subsequent causes, such as death without children or separation, it were restored *.

Some citizens accumulated immense riches; amongst others Niccolaio degli Alberti who died in 1377 is mentioned as the most wealthy individual of Florence, possessing in that city alone about 340,000 golden florins principally acquired in commerce, for he was a merchant and had under his father's care visited every Christian country; afterwards retiring into private life he avoided envy by universal charity and social benevolence. His burial, according to the fashion of that day, was both sumptuous and interesting; for five hundred of his poorest pensioners followed the funeral train while many more of higher rank who had privately lived on his bounty lamented their loss in secrecy. Such characters are rarely noticed by historians, but they relieve the dark picture of worldly interests and assure us of a quiet unobtrusive mass of benevolence existing under the agitated surface of political crime and excited passions †.

Luxury of course augmented in Florence with increasing wealth, and magnificence of dress seems to have been a prevailing fancy not only there but throughout Italy: towards the last quarter of this century fashion became more changeable and whimsical, a probable effect of the stringent sumptuary laws which were successively promulgated, and which seem to have acted rather as a stimulant to ingenious methods of evasion than a permanent check to extravagance. In the year 1330 an expensive taste for superfluous ornaments prevailed to so great an extent amongst the Florentine ladies that severe regulations were issued against it: coronets and garlands of gold, silver, pearls, and precious stones, were so generally worn as to become

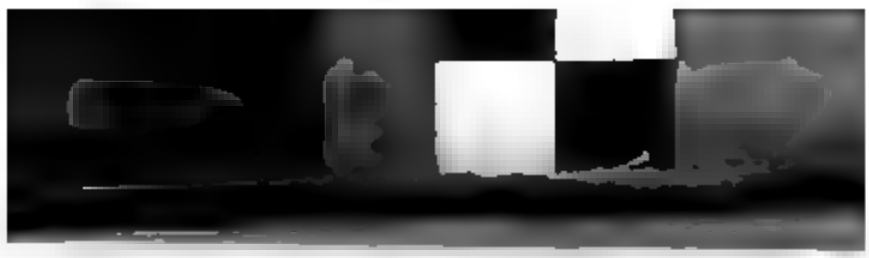
* Cronaca di Buonaccorso Pitti, pp. 130, 135, &c^a.

† M. di C. Stefani, Rub. 777.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xiii., p. 706.

a serious expense to fathers and husbands. Net-work, rich tresses, ribands, and various other ornaments for the hair, all worked in with pearls and jewels; besides many-coloured garments, slashed, and cut, and adorned with a variety of rich stuffs and costly materials, studded with thick-set rows of silver-gilt buttons and often fringed with pearls; all these had become common amongst the fashionable circles of the capital. In April of the above year it was decreed that no woman should thenceforth indulge in this extravagance or use any imitation of such costly ornaments unless executed in painted paper, nor wear any other than very simple clothing with woven patterns not raised or embroidered, or striped perpendicularly or diagonally, except in plain streaks of two colours. Neither were any fringes nor flounces of gold, silver, jewels, enamel, or glass allowed; nor more than two rings on the fingers; nor waist-belts with more than twelve silver clasps; nor trains of more than four feet long: nor were they permitted to add above thirty inches of cloth to their collars: and in like manner were forbidden to use striped gowns, robes, ermines, and fringes to children of both sexes, the only exceptions being the families of knights, a dignity which still held a high rank in public estimation.

The men also were deprived of all superfluous ornaments especially of silver waist-belts and doublets of costly materials: no entertainment was thenceforth to consist of more than three kinds of meat, nor were more than twenty covers allowed at marriage feasts, nor the bride to have above six bridesmaids: and even new-made knights were restricted to a hundred covers and three kinds of meat at their installation dinners; and moreover forbidden to dress for the mere purpose of giving costly robes and other apparel to buffoons, court followers, and jugglers; names then bearing a more dignified meaning than now, although inferior to the Provençal troubadours or trouverres *. Petrarca in

* Villani, Lib. x., cap. cl.—The derivation of Troubadour is from the word "*trobar*," to invent or find, because they recited their own compositions.



an interesting letter to Boccaccio gives a curious picture of the Italian jugglers of this age for whom his writings were often a fertile source of profit.

"They are," he says, "a sort of gentry who with but little wit "have excellent memories but uncommon impudence and effron- "tery. Possessing nothing of their own they dress in the spoils "of others and frequent the courts of princes, emphatically re- "citing verses which they have learnt by heart in the vulgar "tongue, and by this means conciliate the favour of great "lords from whom they receive money, garments, and presents "of every description. They seek out these means of liveli- 'hood at the houses of celebrated authors and by dint of "entreaties, sometimes even of money when the necessities "or mercenary disposition of the latter favours them, they "obtain what they want. I have often been exposed to their "importunities, but now they come more rarely, perhaps on "account of my age or because my studies are changed, or "very likely repelled by my refusals; for being frequently wor- "ried by their importunities I treat them harshly and they "find me inflexible. Sometimes touched by the misery and "humility of the supplicant I yield and employ an hour in pro- "viding something for their wants. I have occasionally seen "them, after having obtained what they asked for, leave me "naked and miserable and return clothed in silk with a well- "filled purse only to express their gratitude for my having de- "livered them from poverty. This has touched me to such a "degree that regarding what I did as a species of almsgiving I "determined not to refuse, but the worry and importunity soon "compelled me to cease. I said one day to some of these "askers, 'You always come to me; why do you not address "yourselves to others, to Boccaccio for example?' They "answered that they had often done so but always unsuccess- "fully. As I expressed my surprise that a man so prodigal of "his money should be so stingy of his verses; they added that

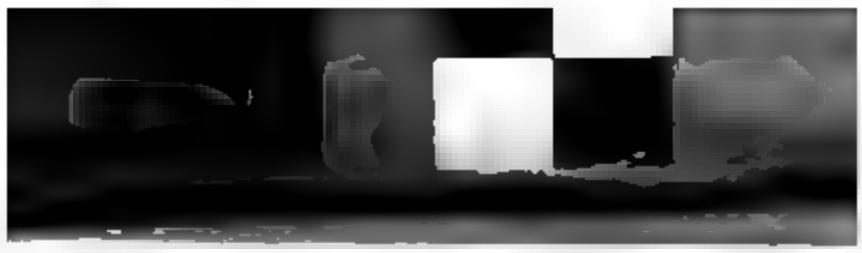
"Boccaccio had burned all his Italian poetry. More than ever "surprised I immediately asked the reason of it; they generally "professed their ignorance, but one replied, 'I believe that "Boccaccio is waiting until his mind becomes ripened by age to "correct his early productions.' I answered, 'Then why burn "them?' At Venice I spoke with our friend Donato who told "me that from his earliest childhood Boccaccio had written "much in Italian; it was his greatest pleasure; but,' added he, "'when he had read what you had done in this language, his "ardour was so effectually cooled that he not only ceased to "write but burned all the poetry he had already written because "it was so inferior to yours'"*.

We shall hereafter notice the rest of this letter to Boccaccio, and proceed to give some further account of Florentine manners and customs taken principally from Sacchetti who lived through the greater part of this century, and in his more advanced age declaimed against the mutability of public taste.

The numerous private feuds and public tumults in Florence occasioned a partial continuance of defensive armour to be commonly worn when other states seem to have been satisfied with more peaceable attire. The Gorgiera or gorget as a piece of defensive armour, not the quiet article of dress which also bore this name, and the Bracciajuola, taken in a similar sense, seem to have been long used by Florentine men as a protection against treachery: but women have ever been considered, perhaps unjustly, as the greatest sinners in the whimsical revolutions of fashion and they accordingly fall more particularly under the lash of both novelist and historian †.

At one time, as we are told by Sacchetti, they wore their dress so low as to expose their armpits; then by a sudden jump were covered to the ears, always in extremes; and it would require volumes to record the incessant changes which had taken place

* De Sade, vol. iii., Lib. vi., p. 658.—Memoires, &c^a.
† Sacchetti Novelle, Nov. 115, 178.



even in his own recollection. The Genoese, Venetians, and Catalonians, remained longest stationary, but even they at last gave way, and all the world agreed, as he expresses it, to discard stability, for both the men and women of Christendom were attired alike and could scarcely be distinguished by any national peculiarity. Florentines, Genoese, Venetians, Veronese, all adopted one mode, and it would have been well if they had kept steady to that; but they did just the reverse: if only a single new caprice appeared, all the world followed; for all the world and especially Italy, was prompt to change and adopt new fashions. The young Florentine girls who used to dress so modestly, he continues, have now changed the fashion of their hoods to resemble courtesans, and thus attired they move about laced up to the throat with all sorts of animals hanging as ornaments about their necks. Their sleeves, or rather their sacks as they should be called; "was there ever so useless and pernicious a fashion! Can any of them reach a glass or take a morsel from the table without dirtying herself or the cloth by the things she knocks down? And thus do the young men, and worse; and such sleeves are made even for sucking babes. The women go about in hoods and cloaks; most of the young men without cloaks in long flowing hair, and if they throw off their breeches, which from their smallness may easily be done, all is off, for they literally stick their posteriors into a pair of socks and expend a yard of cloth on their wristbands, while more stuff is put into a glove than a cloak-hood. However I am comforted by one thing, and that is that all now have begun to put their feet in chains, perhaps as a penance for the many vain things they are guilty of; for we are but a day in this world and in that day the fashion is changed a thousand times: all seek liberty, yet all deprive themselves of it: God has made our feet free and many with a long pointed toe to their shoes can scarcely walk: he has supplied the legs with hinges and many have so bound them up with close lacing that they can

scarcely sit: the bust is tightly bandaged up; the arms trail their drapery along; the throat is rolled in a capuchin; the head so loaded and bound round with caps over the hair that it appears as though it were sawed off: and thus I might go on for ever discoursing of female absurdities, commencing with the immeasurable trains at their feet and proceeding regularly upwards to the head, with which they may always be seen occupied in their chambers; some curling, some smoothing, and some whitening it, so that they often kill themselves with colds caught in these vain occupations" *.

The vast thickness of wrappers worn about the head in those days is further illustrated by Velluti who tells us that a lady of his acquaintance called Monna Diana once passing by the Rossi palace opposite to the church of Santa Felicità, was struck on the head by the falling of a large stone not only without injury but without even feeling anything more than as if some gravel had clattered down about her ears †. The first serious change of dress in Florence which disturbed their ancient customs was introduced by the French followers of Walter de Brienne in 1343, before which says Villani the Florentine attire was the handsomest, the noblest, and the most decent of any other nation, and resembled that of ancient Rome; but the new French fashion deprived men of the power of dressing themselves without assistance, from the tightness and complexity of the habit, of which long beards made a conspicuous feature, in order to look more fierce in arms. This costume which was neither handsome nor decent was eagerly adopted by the young Florentines of both sexes who were, says Villani, naturally vain and disposed to copy the changing modes of other nations, but always choosing the vainest and least respectable as objects of imitation ‡. The splendour of public life, if it may be so called, was conspicuous

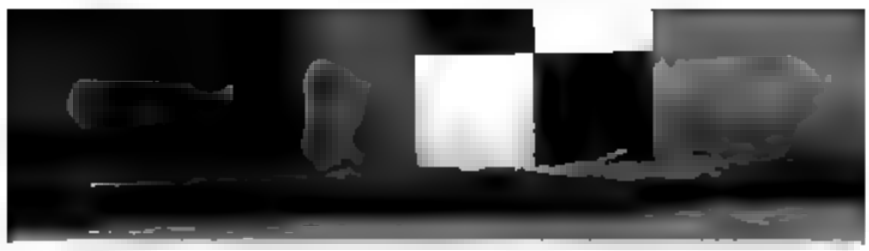
* Sacchetti, Novel. 178. † Donato Velluti, Cronaca, p. 14.
‡ G. Villani, Lib. xii., cap. iv.

at funerals, marriages, christenings and festivals: citizens vied with each other in the expense and magnificence of their entertainments, their presents, and public display of valuables. Sir John Hawkwood's funeral was at the public cost: a committee of the most distinguished citizens was appointed to conduct the ceremony without any restriction of expenditure: his bier, covered with cloth of gold and scarlet velvet was borne by knights of the highest rank, with innumerable torches, banners, shields, and war horses clothed in golden trappings; black cloth was distributed amongst his family and servants: the body exposed on a bier was finally deposited at the baptismal fount of San Giovanni where troops of Florentine matrons had assembled to weep over it: in the church a funeral oration closed the scene, and an equestrian portrait was afterwards painted to serve until a magnificent marble tomb could be erected on which his exploits were to be sculptured by the most skilful artists of the day *. Marriage presents also partook of this magnificence, especially in dress, to an extent apparently unsuitable to the fortune: we find for instance a lady of the Pitti family who with a portion of 1100 florins received the following articles as presents. A petticoat of silk velvet striped black and white lined with miniver, value 100 florins; a pink petticoat of the same kind, but lined with scarlet taffeta worth 45 florins; another of crimson silk lined with green taffeta of 20 florins value; three others of black and coloured silks estimated at 18, 10, and 15 florins; a black cloak at 8 florins; three silver waist-belts 31 florins: besides these there were a diamond, an emerald, a silver collar or necklace, an ivory ornamented cabinet, with other articles of clothing amounting altogether to 498 golden florins or nearly half the dowry, each florin being equal to more than a pound sterling of the present day †. Magnificence in dress then an indication of high rank, seems to have been the prevailing taste

* S. Ammirato, Lib. xvi., p. 844. † Cronaca di Buon. Pitti, pp. 135, 136.

of the Italians during all this century, on which subject we have some curious particulars from the Frate Francesco Pippino who wrote in 1313, as well as from Giovanni Musso a Placentian writer of the year 1388, both of them published and cited by Muratori.

" Now indeed," says Pippino, " in the present luxurious age many shameful practices are introduced instead of the former customs ; many indeed to the injury of people's minds, because frugality is exchanged for magnificence ; the clothing being now remarkable for its exquisite materials workmanship and superfluous ornaments of silver, gold, and pearls ; admirable fabrics ; wide-spreading embroidery ; silk for vests, painted or variously coloured, and lined with divers precious furs from foreign countries. Excitement to gluttony is not wanting; foreign wines are much esteemed, and almost all the people drink in public. The viands are sumptuous ; the chief cooks are held in great honour ; provocatives of the palate are eagerly sought after ; ostentation increases ; money-makers exert themselves to supply these tastes ; hence usuries, frauds, rapine, extortion, pillage, and contentions in the commonwealth : also unlawful taxes ; oppression of the innocent ; banishment of citizens, and the combinations of rich men. Our true god is our belly ; we adhere to the pomps which were renounced at our baptism, and thus desert to the great enemy of our race. Well indeed does Seneca the instructor of morals, in his book of orations curse our times in the following words : ' Daily, things grow worse because the whole contest is for dishonourable matters. Behold ! the indolent senses of youth are numbed, nor are they active in the pursuit of any one honest thing. Sleep, languor, and a carefulness for bad things, worse than sleep and languor have seized upon their minds ; the love of singing, dancing, and other unworthy occupations possesses them : they are effeminate : to soften the hair, to lower the tone of their voice to female compli-



ments ; to vie with women in effeminacy of person, and adorn themselves with unbecoming delicacy is the object of our youth ' " *.

Such were Pippino's strictures at the commencement of the fourteenth century, and it is worth observing how the same strain of censure is still maintained at its close, the past age being ever thrust forward as an example to the present. Giovanni Mussa discoursing in his history of Placentia about public manners in 1388, complains that the most extravagant expenses were incurred by both sexes in food, clothing and in all other things, much more than had formerly been the custom. " The ladies," he says, " wear long and wide garments of silk, velvet, and gilded silk cloth, and cloth of gold and entire silken cloths ; and of scarlet wool, and purple, and of other most noble woollen fabrics. These stuffs whether of velvet or of gold, or gilded or of silk, cost for one '*Cabano*,' '*Pellarda*,' or '*Barilotto*,' from 25 to 60 golden florins or ducats ; which garments are made with sleeves wide throughout, as well below as above, and which said sleeves cover to the middle of the hand, and some hang down to the ground open only at the outside and pointed underneath after the form of the long Catalan shields which are broad above and narrow and sharp-pointed at the nether end. On some of the aforesaid sleeves are fastened from three to five ounces of pearls worth 10 florins an ounce : others are adorned with wide borders of gold placed round the collar of the throat in the guise of a dog's collar : and also round the extremity of the sleeves, and round other sleeves under the above-mentioned garments. And they wear little hoods with wide fringes of gold or pearl, and girded in the waist with splendid bands of gilt silver and of pearls worth 25 golden florins each more or less ; and sometimes they go altogether ungirded. And every lady hath so many rings and other ornaments with precious stones that they

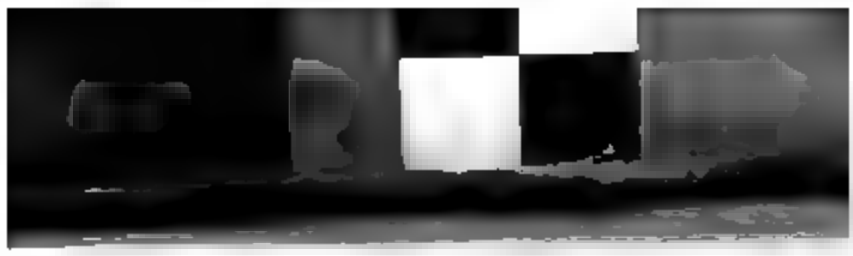
* Muratori, Antichità, vol. ii., p. 246.

are worth from 30 to 50 golden florins. However, such garments are decent because they do not show the bosom; but they have other improper vestments called '*Ciprianæ*' which are very wide towards the feet, and higher up are narrow with long and wide sleeves like the others, of the same value and similarly ornamented, and they are adorned in front with round silver-gilt buttons or pearls, from the throat to the ground. These Ciprianæ have the neck so wide that they show the bosom but the dress would be altogether elegant if it were more modestly closed at the upper part. The said ladies wear also on their heads ornaments of exceeding value: that is to say, some wear chaplets of silver gilt, or of pure gold, with pearls and precious stones costing from 70 to 100 golden florins: some wear tassels of large pearls of 100 or 125 florins value, called '*Terzolla*' because they are composed of three hundred large pearls and are arranged in three rows. Most of the said ladies instead of plats of gold or silk, which they formerly wreathed and entwined in their hair, now wear beads and gilt or silken cords covered with pearls: some use short mantles or cloaks reaching no lower than the hands, lined with fine cloth or miniver; and also on splendid strings a rosary of red coral or amber. Matrons and old women wear a noble mantle, wide and long, down to the ground; rounded towards the bottom, open in front and made in folds, but buttoned towards the throat for a span's breadth with silver gilt or pearl buttons; and they are usually made with a collar; every lady having three mantles or more, one of '*Blavo*,' (?) one of purple, and one of striped camlet furred, with golden fringes; and they sometimes wear the hood and sometimes not. But they wear veils of silk or fair cotton, fine and white. Widow ladies wear similar clothing, but all brown and without gold or pearls; the buttons being brown also, and brown hoods or fine white linen or cotton veils. In like manner young men wear '*Cabanos*,' '*Barillotos*,' and '*Pellardas*,' long and wide every-

where down to the ground with rich bordering of native and foreign furs: these garments are of cloth, and silk, and velvet, and cost from 20 to 30 golden florins. They use mantles wide and long down to the ground, and short cloaks only reaching to their hands: old men wear similar clothing and double hoods of cloth and over these, splendid caps, not woven nor seamed but ending in a point. The youths also wear other cloaks short and wide and some short and narrow, so short as hardly to reach below the waist: besides which they wear stockings of cloth tied in five places to short and tight hose which are worn under the other garments and along with the stockings cover all the nether limbs. Some of these close dresses are of linen cloth and are occasionally embroidered with silver, silk, and pearls; some more, some less; and others are of silk and velvet. The fore-mentioned short cloaks are a little longer at the back and front than at the sides, and are sometimes bound round the waist over all the other clothes; and are generally without hoods except in winter. Stockings are worn soled; with white shoes under the said soled stockings both in summer and winter: sometimes they wear shoes with long and sharp points extending three inches beyond the foot. All the citizens of Placentia of both sexes as they formerly used to wear shoes and soled stockings without points, so now do they wear them with small points which both long and short are full of the hair of oxen. Also many youths and damsels wear on their necks chains, or silver or gilt circles, or pearls, or red coral: and the said youths wear no beard and shave the neck also below half the ear; and above they wear the '*Zazzera*' or Cæsarean, or imperial form of hair, large and round. Some of them keep one horse and from that to five according to their means, and some none. Those who keep one horse and upwards maintain a servant or servants who have every year as much as 12 golden florins each for their salary: waiting women earn seven golden florins a year each and they have food, but not

clothing. About food all the citizens of Placentia do marvellous things, especially at feasts and weddings, for they usually give what followeth. First, they give good white and red wine, but before all things they give confections of sugar; and for the first course they have two capons; or one capon and a great piece of meat for every trencher, ornamented with almonds, and sugar, and spices, and other good things: afterwards they give roasted meats in great quantity, either of capons, pullets, pheasants, partridges, hares kids and other viands according to the season: anon come pies and cream cheeses with sugar on the top: then fruits: then, (the hands being first washed) before the tables are cleared they give drink, and confections of sugar; and afterwards drink again. Some instead of pies and junkets give at the beginning of dinner pies which they call tarts made with eggs and cheese and milk; and sugar in good quantity spread upon the said tarts. At supper they give in winter jellies of wild fowl, of capons, of Guinea fowl, of veal and of fish: then roasts of veal and capons; afterwards fruit; and then comes the washing of hands confections and wine as before.

In summer the suppers consist, besides the above jellies, of kid, pork, pullets, fish: then roast or fries of pullets and other viands according to the season and afterwards drink. On the second day after a wedding they first give macaroni with cheese, saffron, ginger and other spices; then roast veal and fruits; wash their hands; confections and wine as before. After supper the wedding is considered as finished and the guests return home. In Lent they first give drink with sweetmeats; then drink again; afterwards figs and blanched almonds followed by a large fish seasoned with pepper, rice soup with almond milk; sugar, spices, and salt eels. After these come roasted pike with sauce of vinegar or mustard, and mulled wine: then are given nuts and other fruits, after which the usual ablutions, wines, sweetmeats and second drinking.



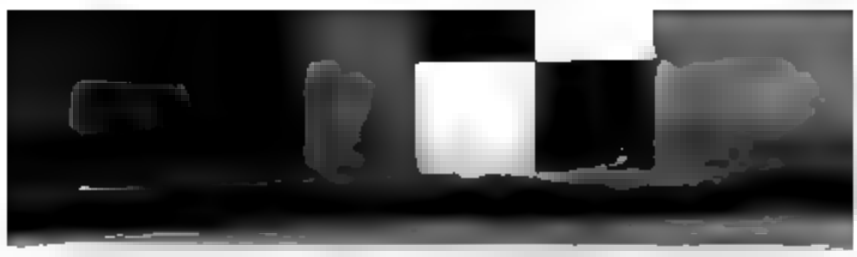
The citizens of Placentia now live splendidly orderly and handsomely in fine houses, and with better furniture and plate than they were accustomed to seventy years ago; that is to say before the year of Christ 1320. They have now finer dwellings, more splendid chambers, fire-places and chimneys, gutters, cisterns, wells, orchards, gardens; and most of them terraces or balconies: and there are at present several hearths and chimneys for fire and smoke in those houses which formerly were almost without; for in the aforesaid time they kindled one fire only in the middle of the house under the hollow of the roof: and all the family assembled round it and used it for cooking: and I have seen, even in my time, that many houses were without wells and very few with garrets. Finer wines are now drunk than in former days, and the manner of feeding amongst Placentians is generally thus. The master of the house with his wife and children eat at the first table in a separate chamber with a fire; and the servants after them in another part of the house at another fire or generally in the kitchen. Two people eat out of one plate, but each person has his own soup; one mug of earthenware or two of glass, one for wine and one for water, are supplied to each. There are many who oblige their own servants to wait on them at table with large knives to cut the meat and other things before them. And ere they are seated at table water is brought round in a basin; and again after dinner and supper, before the table is cleared they once more wash their hands. The quantity of furniture now made use of, which formerly was used by very few citizens, is as twelve to one; and this is the effect of commerce by Placentian merchants who trade with France, Flanders, and Spain. First, tables of eighteen inches wide are used; which were formerly but twelve: and also napkins, that of old were made use of by few: and they have trenchers, and spoons, and forks of silver, and soup-plates of stone, and large knives at table, and ewers and basins, and great and small coverlets on the beds and

cloth curtains round about the said beds; and also hangings of arras and candelabra of bronze or iron, and torches and candles of wax or tallow, and other fine furniture and vessels and vases. And many make two fires; one in the chimney and another in the kitchen, or in the chamber instead of the chimney*. Many keep good preserves of sugar and honey in their houses, and all these things are very expensive; wherefore large dowers are now requisite, amounting to 400, 500, and 600 golden florins and more; all of which is expended by the bridegroom and sometimes more in adorning the bride and in the wedding. And he who marries spends 100 golden florins or thereabouts, over and above the dowry, in marriage garments and presents for the bride and in marriage ceremonies. Such expense as this cannot be incurred with prudence or justice, and many ruin themselves who thus wish or are expected to do more than they can.

If any one at present possesses nine cows and two horses he certainly expends 300 florins a year which are equal to 480 imperial lire; and so in proportion to the number of cows: that is to say in food, clothing, the salaries of servants, taxes tolls and other extraordinary expenses of daily and inevitable occurrence. Certes there are few who can long bear such expenses, and therefore many from these causes are forced to desert their country and become soldiers, retainers, merchants, usurers, &c.

It must not be supposed that amongst the above mentioned are included mechanics; none are meant but nobles, merchants, and other good and ancient citizens of Placentia who follow no trade. The mechanics also indulge in great expenses, more than of old, and chiefly in dress for themselves and their wives; but trade still will always support those who wish to

* Meaning probably of embers in a brasier placed in the centre of the room as is still the custom amongst Italians.



live with honour. At present people cannot live without wine, and thus all are now accustomed to drink it *.

From other sources we also learn that an increasing taste for wines and even iced wines prevailed in this century as early as 1343 †; not so much, at Florence, by the importation of foreign produce as by the agricultural introduction of the finer kinds of vines, amongst which the Vernaccio di Corniglia of Porto Venere seems to have been a favourite: yet so wild was the country in 1383 that even in the vineyards of that place it was not uncommon to see the wolves come down and while the labourers were at work devour their day's food which was generally deposited in the boat that conveyed them to and from the vineyard ‡.

The manners of Placentia so industriously described by Giovanni Musso, will apply with little variation except in point of magnificence, to Florence and most other Italian cities at this period; but in some of them accompanied by a sort of barbaric splendour that now can scarcely be reconciled with common sense, much less with common humanity when the means were produced by grinding taxation; nor with the acknowledged talents of those princes who indulged in it. At the marriage of Violante daughter of Galeazzo Visconte to Lionel Duke of Clarence in 1368, as well as at the coronation of her brother as Duke of Milan in 1395, the banquets described by Corio seem almost fabulous when compared with the comparative simplicity of our own times, and form a singular contrast.

The Duke of Clarence arrived at Milan in May and entered that town escorted by Galeazzo and a brilliant retinue of Milanese nobles and ladies, divided into separate bands, each similarly attired in magnificent dresses for the occasion, while

* Giovanni Musso, De Moribus Civium Placentiæ, apud Muratori, Antichità, tomo iiº, p. 348.

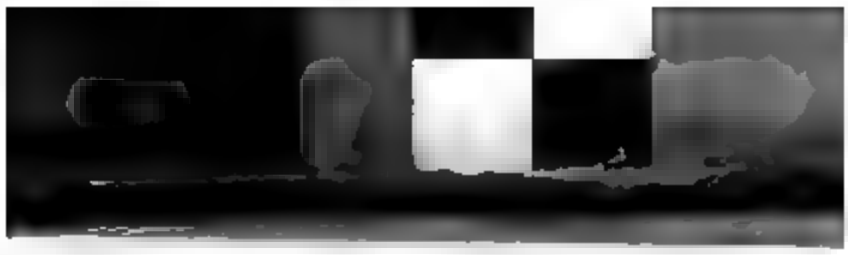
† Cronaca di Donato Velluti, p. 82.

‡ Cronaca di Velluti, p. 82.—Sacchetti, Nov. 177.

a body of two thousand English horsemen including archers brought up the rear. On the fifteenth of June the marriage ceremony was performed at Santa Maria Maggiore where Bernabò gave away his niece, and the same day, apparently in the open court before his palace in the Piazza dell' Arenga, Galeazzo gave the splendid feast which we are now about to describe.

The guests were arranged according to their dignity at two separate tables; to the first of which besides the Visconte family and the English prince, were admitted the Count of Savoy, the Bishop of Novara who officiated at the marriage; and the most distinguished English and Italian barons. But one of the most honoured and illustrious guests at this table was the poet Petrarca whose brilliant genius had thus made him a companion for princes. He was universally courted, for all the Italian tyrants were more or less people of taste and letters or encouragers of them, and fully alive to the importance of flattering the most distinguished literary men and artists of the day, whose genius they well knew could spread their name over the broad expanse of coming generations, either for good or evil; and none were more successfully courted than Francesco Petrarca by Galeazzo Visconte. There was a charm too potent in the silken network of princely attentions and unlimited power for the mind even of the impatient independent Petrarch to resist, when managed by the skilful hand of a Visconte; and he accordingly became for some years one of Galeazzo's warmest adherents, honoured by and honouring the court of which he now formed a part.

Reina della Scala and a company of illustrious matrons filled the second table which held about a hundred guests or fifty covers. There were eighteen courses each ushered in with exceeding pomp, and accompanied by a succession of presents consisting of horses, dogs, hawks, hounds, falcons, armour and other valuable offerings. The first course was served up in



duplicate, as a mark of peculiar honour, to the bridegroom's table, and was composed amongst other dishes of two small gilded porklings with fire in their mouth and gilded fish called "*Porcelletti.*" Along with these were led into the company, two greyhounds in silken leashes and velvet collars besides other gifts with technical or obsolete names now difficult to explain.

The second course consisted of gilded hares and pike, accompanied by the offering of twelve couple of greyhounds in six leashes of silken cord with gilded clasps and silk collars: also six gosshawks adorned with enamelled silver buttons on which were seen the crest of Galeazzo and his son the Count of Vertù.

At the third entry appeared as the principal dish a large calf, whole, and completely gilt, a more substantial object of devotion than that of the wilderness, with many smaller dishes principally of gilt trout. This was accompanied by twelve hounds and other sporting dogs of divers breeds with velvet collars gilded clasps and buckles, and leashes of silken cord.

The fourth course displayed a mixture of gilt partridges quails and roast gilded trout spread over the royal board; while twelve beautiful falcons with bells, silk hoods, and silver crested buttons, fluttered round the guests attended by twelve couple of sporting dogs in gilded chains and silken leashes.

The fifth course was composed of gilt ducks, gilt game, gilt fish, principally carp, and a living present of six hawks in velvet hoods studded with pearls, besides silver buttons and other costly trappings.

Beef, and capons with garlic sauce; sturgeons in water, and other viands, made up the sixth entry; and for presents there were twelve steel cuirasses buckled and studded with silver.

The seventh course consisted of capons, fish, and other animal food served up in lemonade; and as presents twelve complete suits of tilting armour, then famous at Milan; twelve

superb saddles and twelve lances; of which two saddles were richly adorned with silver mounting for the Duke of Clarence.

The eighth course was made up of pastry, beef and great eel pies, with a present of twelve complete suits of war-armour, two of them more costly and skilfully ornamented for the English prince.

For the ninth course were served up a series of meat and fish jellies with a dozen pieces of gold and an equal quantity of silver cloth.

The tenth service was of the same nature, but principally lampreys, and accompanied by two large enamelled silver flasks and six basins of silver, gilt and enamelled like the flasks, one of which was filled with Malmsey, the other with fine Vernaccia wine.

The eleventh course was principally of kid and other roasted meat; accompanied by six horses; six saddles mounted in gilt silver; six lances; six gilded targets, and six fine steel caps of which two were ornamented with gilt silver for the bridegroom.

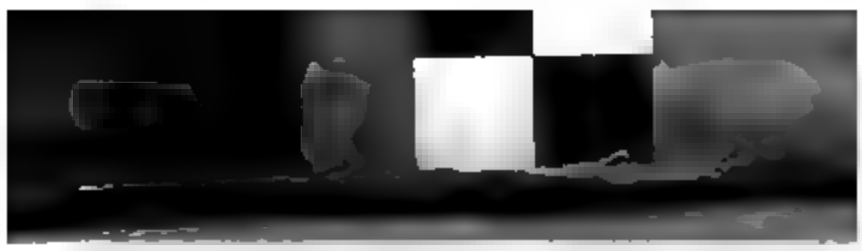
The twelfth course consisted of hares with other meat and fish, variously cooked and served in silver; and along with it six great coursers with saddles and golden ornaments.

Venison and beef in various shapes supplied the thirteenth service, besides six war-horses in gilded bridles and green velvet caparisons, tabards, and silken ornaments.

The fourteenth course of this everlasting feast was made up of fowls and capons dressed in red and green sauces with citron; and a present of six jousting steeds in gilded bridles; caparisons of red velvet; gilt studs, buttons, and topknots; and halters of crimson velvet.

For the fifteenth course came peacocks, tongues, carp, and vegetables: and as presents a hood, mantle, and petticoat covered with pearls and lined with ermine.

The sixteenth course brought rabbits, peacocks, roasted



ducks and other dishes; accompanied by a great silver basin, a large ruby, a diamond, a pearl, and some other valuables.

For the seventeenth course we have junkets and cheese in various forms accompanied by the appropriate gift of twelve fat kine.

The eighteenth and last course of this monstrous banquet consisted of fruits and sweetmeats, with two valuable coursers for the Duke of Clarence, called the Lion and the Abbot; besides seventy-seven horses for his principal barons and followers, all at the expense of Galeazzo Visconte who throughout this tedious entertainment was attended by twelve knights of the highest rank*.

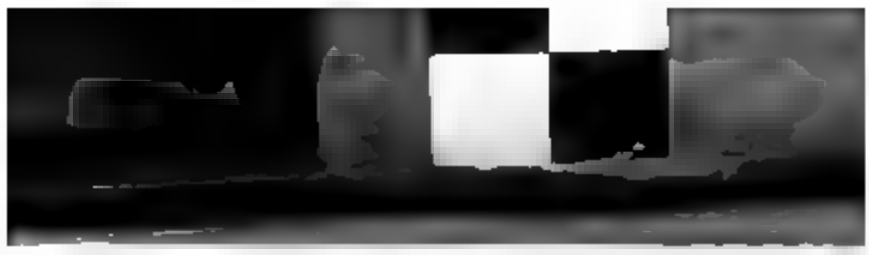
A similar feast and more circumstantially related by Corio, was given at Gian-Galeazzo's coronation: it consisted of many tables loaded with ducal plate, and surrounded by a vast concourse of illustrious foreigners, princes, lords, and ambassadors of every rank and nation. The dinner was enlivened by music, the guests washed in distilled odoriferous waters; Greek, and particularly Malmsey wine, flowed in abundance; gilt and silvered bread stamped with the imperial and ducal arms was served to the guests; gilded fish, pigs, and calves, in vast dishes of solid silver placed whole on the table; mutton, capons, fowls, kids, hares, and pigeons in abundance; two gilded bears served up whole in citron sauce; pheasants and peacocks in various guises. A vast silver dish containing an entire stag dressed and gilded; a whole doe similarly gilt and garnished with two wild kids: quails, partridges, and other game in flocks; gilt tarts, pies, baked pears, made dishes in the form of fish and other animals; lemonade; syrups; roast fish with red sauce in silver soup plates; silvered eel pasties; silvered jellies; trout with black sauce; silvered sturgeous; silvered fruit tarts; fresh almonds peaches and numerous confections. After dinner the tables were covered with gold and silver

* Corio, Parte iii°, folio 239.

plate, collars, chains, necklaces, rings, cloth of gold, silks, velvets, and other rich materials; all of which were presented to the guests according to their rank, to the value of 30,000 florins. Besides these, fifty coursers with high saddles covered with silk were presented to the imperial officers, and the day was spent in singing, dancing, and other pastimes. A military review and tournament occupied several days and the prize was carried off by Bartolommeo Manchino, a Bolognese gentleman, against the whole chivalry of Christendom and divers Saracen knights who were attracted by the fame of this magnificent entertainment*.

The sumptuary laws of Florence forbid, and probably in some measure prevented the introduction of such extravagance there, for a court presided over by a foreign judge with extensive powers and severe penalties, was created to enforce their observance; and orders were at the same time applied to the correction of trade combinations and monopolies, and to assize both meat and fish. The consequence of all this Villani tells us, was considerable improvement with less luxurious habits to the great profit of the citizens, but injurious to silk-merchants and goldsmiths whose every-day employment was inventing new and fanciful ornaments. These laws were however applauded and imitated by almost all the free cities of Italy, but sadly lamented by the women, who spent as much by sending to Flanders and Brabant for woven striped stuffs at any expense as a substitute for the fancifully cut, slashed, and embroidered dresses which were prohibited at Florence. Still Villani insists on the great advantage which accrued to the citizens by thus checking the growing extravagance of their women in marriage and baptismal feasts; and this was probably its most favourable and rational point of view, for there is much waste of health and food in fine cookery and sumptuous fare, and comparatively little employment†.

* Corio, Parte iv^a^, folio 266. † Villani, Lib. x., cap. cl.



Petrarch in an irritable letter to Boccaccio written after some passages in his "Africa" had been severely handled in the literary circles of Florence, attacks the Florentines for their luxury. The emperor Frederic the Second, he says, who was well acquainted with Italy declared that all intimacy with Italians should be avoided, for they were too prying, too sharp-sighted for their neighbours' faults; too prompt to pass judgment; and too free in the formation of their opinion without troubling themselves about its truth or falsehood; and this Petrarch asserts was peculiarly applicable to the Florentines.

"More soft, more effeminate than Sardanapalus, in their mode of living; they are more rigid and severe than Cato and Fabricius in their censures. Their minds are more subtle than solid, rather crude than matured; envy consumes them, and they cannot bear to hear any of their compatriots praised, they take it as an indirect reproach to themselves: the least attempt to enlighten them offends; anything distinguished displeases. Take a proof as clear as day: our country as you know has been always agitated by frequent and sharp wars: having within herself able generals she yet has always affected to seek for strangers, choosing rather to be vanquished under foreign leaders than victorious under her own countrymen! This is an odious mode of thinking which our fellow-citizens do not inherit from their Roman ancestors"*.

The invective is not devoid of truth; jealousy though much softened is not yet extinct in the Florentine character, and at that period it was infected with a biting, coarse, and practical wit, often tinged by ill-nature; very spiteful; and mixed with a strong dash of knavery. This humour pervaded all ranks, and if Sacchetti may be trusted, even the philosophic Dante was not entirely free from it: a cunning scheme to mortify somebody or gain something generally formed its essence, and the unmingled pleasure of mirth was rarely the single motive

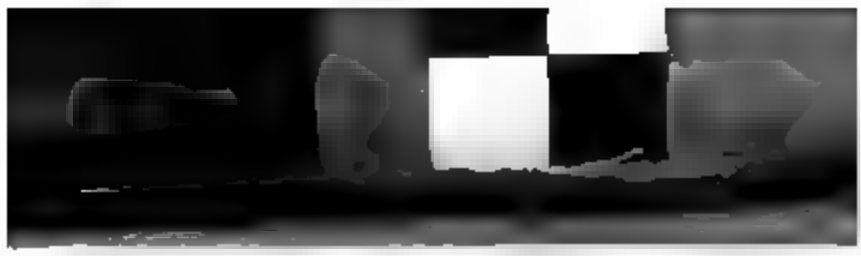
* Petrarca, Epistle to Boccaccio, Vide De Sade, vol. iii., Lib. vi., p. 641.

of its conception. Sacchetti's novels, which true or false as personal anecdotes, are at least a portrait of existing manners, afford numerous examples of this; and in their most approved wits and humourists little is offered but a compound of dirty swindling and knavish dexterity, with an utter recklessness of other people's feelings.

The filthy indecency of these novels is not compensated by the moral which Sacchetti with a higher tone of sentiment so frequently draws from them, and they exhibit a coarseness of general manners that would now be disgusting to many of the lower orders of civilised nations. The Jews about this period with a more business-like purpose, traded on the superstitious ignorance and vitiated tastes of the day, and by fostering the vulgar persuasion of their magical knowledge, were feared and hated, and yet everlastingly consulted by the women and other credulous members of Christianity, especially in the country, where morals hung as loosely on the age as in the crowded streets of capitals*.

It was customary in those days for reduced gentlemen to live a good deal on the public, not as in our own age and country by place and pension, but by vulgar highway robbery; and many that resided in dilapidated country-houses had no scruple about administering to their necessities by plunder. Nor were the richer families, when tempted, a whit more nice in their choice of expedients; on the contrary greater power was applied with greater effect in oppressing poorer neighbours by an exercise of unbounded tyranny of which both popolani and nobles were equally guilty; the former generally with impunity, the latter with great risk of punishment. As an instance of this sort of misrule may be cited Sacchetti's anecdote of one of the Medici family, then rapidly advancing towards supreme authority, who seized on the vineyard of a poor neighbour called Cenni without right or conscience, and the latter only succeeded in

* Fran. Sacchetti, Novel. 153, 175, 177, *passim*.



obtaining redress, through the influence of Francesco de' Medici chief of the clan, by his shrewd wit and natural sagacity, when one of those long and expensive lawsuits that sometimes lasted thirty years, would have totally ruined him*.

Cenni arrived one morning at Florence and going straight to Francesco de' Medici addressed him thus. "Messer Fran-" cesco, I come before God and before you to beseech you for " the love of Christ to save me from being robbed, if I am not " pre-ordained to be so. One of your kinsmen wants to rob " me of my vineyard, which I must consider as lost if you will " not assist me. Now I say to you Messer Francesco, that if " he be predestined to have it why let him have it; and I will " tell you why. You who have lived so long must know that " this world is governed by fits and fashions; sometimes we " have the fit of small-pox; sometimes of pestilence; some-" times a general blight of the harvests; sometimes a fit comes " over the land which in a twinkling kills many people; some-" times the world is plagued with a fit of never doing justice " to any one; and thus we have a fit of one thing and then of " another; wherefore to come back to the question, I say that " against such inevitable occurrences there is no protection. " In like manner what I am come to beg your assistance for " through the love of God is just this: that if the fit of taking " vineyards is come on the earth why then let your kinsman " take mine and God prosper him; for against these visitations " I neither can nor will attempt to struggle: but if this fit be " not now come on the world then I humbly beseech you that " my vineyard may be spared to me." "My good man," answered Francesco, " be you assured that fit or no fit your vine-" yard shall not be taken from you." So saying he assembled some of the chief members of his family, made Cenni plead his cause again before them and afterwards sent orders to their kinsman, who had already taken possession, to restore the dis-

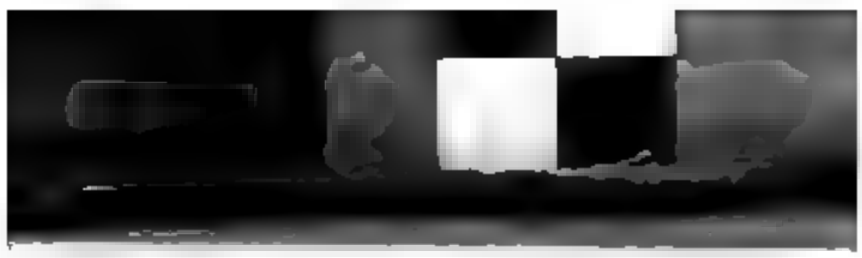
* Cronaca di Velluti, p. 37.

puted property. It is quite true adds Sacchetti that the world is governed by fits, except only the fit of right doing*. Such however was republican liberty, and no wonder that the powerful citizens were so enthusiastically attached to it; for they not only enjoyed their proper portion but appropriated that of others to their share.

Florentine society at this epoch, as far as we can judge from the scanty materials that exist, was in fact a mixture of great wealth and power with extensive poverty and dependence: and although there does not appear except on the estates of the ancient nobles, to have been any regular feudal service yet all the great popolani who possessed landed property seem to have been complete lords of their peasantry either from hereditary descent, purchased rights or the engagements of the cultivator; and these under the name of "*Fedeli*" were scarcely more than vassals with permanent obligations and perhaps similar to the Roman clients; for we continually read of their bringing their followers into Florence during public disturbances either to aid a faction or for private war. Besides these followers and domestic servants there are indications of the existence of slavery as late even as the year 1417, as we learn from Buonaccorso Pitti, who mentions his going as podestà to San Gimignano with twenty-eight in family including two slaves; but when at private lodgings in Pisa his establishment, though a citizen of high rank, was only two men and one woman-servant besides a nurse; and the rent he paid for a furnished house, which he occupied only two months, was 48 golden florins; yet outside of the town he was lodged double that time for 20 florins †.

The activity, riches, and influence of Florentine merchants, or Lombards as they were usually called by transalpine nations, made them so generally necessary that they everywhere acquired a rank and consequence far beyond that due to their

* F. Sacchetti, Nov. 88. † Cronaca di B. Pitti, pp. 86 106.



mercantile character alone. A Florentine citizen was everywhere considered noble, and deemed fit company for princes at the very moment that he was in the full pursuit of commercial business: some were treated almost as sovereign princes, especially when like Donato Acciajuoli who was banished in 1396, their family had been frequently honoured by the dignity of supreme magistrate and the rank of cardinal, a powerful station in those proud and palmy days of ecclesiastical authority. One of Donato's brothers was also Duke of Athens, another was Archbishop of Patras; besides which several members of his family enjoyed stations of high rank under the crown of Naples. He himself had filled the highest places in the commonwealth; had been frequently employed as ambassador, was a knight of the Florentine people, senator of Rome; and possessed two feudal baronies in the kingdom of Naples. His name was therefore known and respected throughout Christendom: popes wrote to inform him of their election and continued to honour him even while in exile; nor did any foreign ambassador arrive at Florence while he was in power without an especial commission to visit Donato Acciajuoli, who was invidiously styled by his enemies the Lord, and the Doge of Florence. Yet he quietly submitted to twenty years of exile in a good and patriotic cause!

But notwithstanding these high distinctions which were more or less open to every Florentine citizen, there seems to have been none of the superior trades and few of the others beneath a citizen's attention, even in the highest families; their sons were early placed in shops, warehouses, or counting-houses; first in Florence; then abroad; travelling from country to country in the pursuit of gain and acquainted with all the world *. In these excursions it was not unusual for a merchant to unite gambling with trade; and we accordingly see Buonaccorso Pitti while on the most intimate terms of sociability with the

* Cronaca di Donato Velluti, pp. 44, 63, 65.

whole blood-royal of France, pursuing his traffic as a merchant, acting as ambassador, and taking a commission from one Bernardo di Cino to sell or gamble a large amount of pearls and other jewels to Duke Albert of Bavaria Count of Holland; who however declined both propositions. Nor does there appear to have been any lack of martial spirit when occasion offered; Buonaccorso displayed much in resenting a private insult at play from one of the royal family of France; and being eager for military glory he and two Italian friends joined the king's armament against England in 1383, with thirty-six horse entirely at their own expense *.

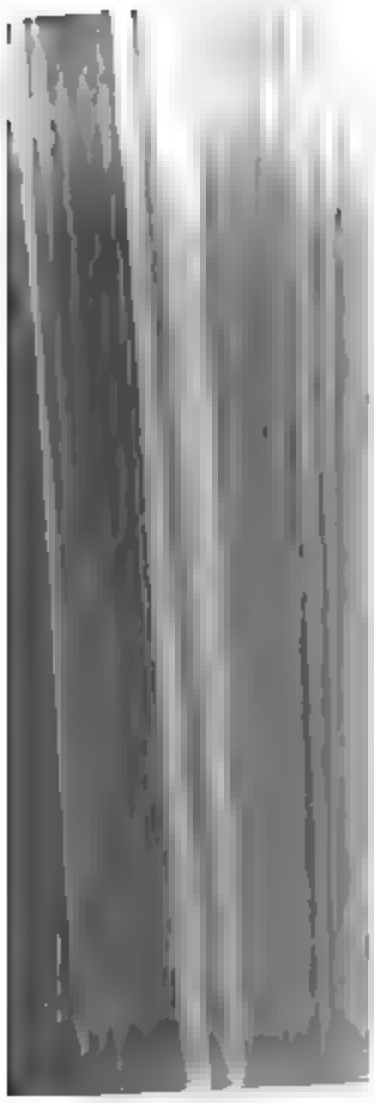
The English at this time stood high in the world's opinion as a military nation, but if we may believe the testimony of Petrarca it was not always so: it will perhaps surprise our readers to learn the judgment once pronounced, whether true or false, on their forefathers. In a letter to his friend Pierre le Bercheur on the decay of France and Italy the poet says, "In my younger days," (probably during the wars of Bruce and Edward II.) the inhabitants of Great Britain who are called English were the most cowardly of all barbarians, inferior even to the vile Scots; and then, on the contrary, the military condition of France was most flourishing: at present (1361) the English having become a warlike nation have subdued the French by frequent and unexpected victories: in ravaging France with fire and sword they have reduced that kingdom to such a state that I could scarcely recognise it in my late journey. Will you learn in two words the cause of this alteration? Listen to Sallust: he says that fortune changes with manners, and that empire goes from bad to better. Force, spirit, virtue, renown, circulate like money and go from nation to nation. Renown ever empty and changeable has one thing fixed and certain: she always follows virtue and flies vice." Amongst the causes of French and Italian decay he mentions the relaxation

* Cronaca di Pitti, pp. 33 and 45.

of military discipline, luxury and debauchery as morally and physically enervating to man; a want of emulation in the officers and subordination in the soldiers. "When you enter a camp," he continues, "you believe yourself in some disreputable place or tavern. They do not get drunk on every sort of wine; they must have foreign wines; and when these are not to be had they complain that the army wants everything, that they are dying of thirst and that there is no wonder that soldiers desert. Military emulation has passed from the use of arms to the bottle, and it is now no longer a question about what weapons are to be adopted against the enemy but what glasses are to be placed for drinking. He who drinks the largest bumpers, who carries off most wine, is regarded as the victor and crowned with laurel. Seneca foretold the day when drunkenness would be honoured, and drinking deep be considered a virtue. The officers far from correcting their soldiers show them the example! What can drunken men perform? They stagnate in their tents, snoring, sweating, gambling, eating; and steeped in low debauchery with the women who follow their camp. When in the field they quit their ranks; know not their leaders; obey nobody; and wander about without order like bees which have lost their hive. Sluggards, cowards, ignorant, boasters: if they take up arms, if they mount on horseback, it is not to serve their prince or defend their country, or to acquire renown; but for interest, for vanity, for love of pleasure. If they adorn themselves with gold it is to please their mistresses and enrich their enemies of whom they are the prey"*.

Such was Petrarca's opinion of camp discipline and morality in 1362: but things were worse at court, and brought down the poet's indignant censure both in prose and verse although by no means a rigid moralist in his own conduct. His favourite denomination for Avignon was the "*Western Babylon*," and all, he asserts, that was ever said of the two Babylons of

* De Sade, vol. iii., p. 552.



neavens by the elevation
her quiver; that Cambyse
man There are to be seen
Cerberus who devours all
Minotaur, offspring of th
seen elsewhere of the fr
assembled. No clue
Dædalus, no Ariadne!
appeases the most cruel
hearts, splits rocks, opens
and to comprehend all in
chase Jesus Christ. In
band of poor fishermen t
move in gold and purple
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wrought for their living o
habit superb palaces. The
of lead depend that serve
whom they scale and broil
expatiating awhile in thi
pride, envy, luxury and a
piety, faith nor charity. T
just man is oppressed; th

were boldly uttered, did not any more than its disgusting condition prevent Petrarca's residence in Avignon, and this condition, described in his second dialogue with Saint Augustine, seeing that it partly belongs to Italian manners, may be shortly noticed as a curious sketch of the ecclesiastical metropolis.

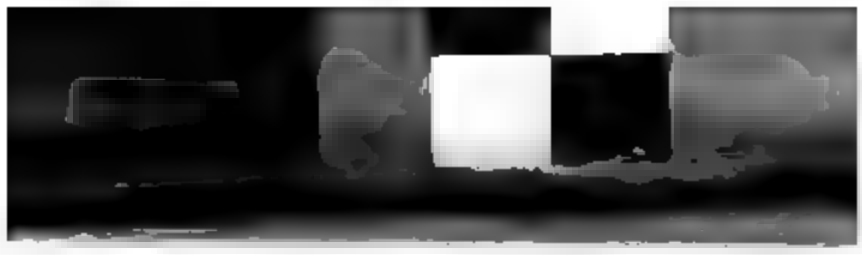
Complaining of his manner of life at Avignon, even before Laura's death; he says, "I am weary of it beyond all expression: I inhabit a dirty, noisy town which is the common sink and receptacle of all the filth of the world: everything here disgusts and nauseates: it is an assemblage of narrow dirty streets where you cannot move a step without encountering furious dogs, stinking pigs, carts which stun you with their rattle; teams of four horses that block up all the ways; deformed beggars that cannot be regarded without horror; strange countenances from every nation; rich insolence drunk with pleasure and debauchery, and a licentious populace in everlasting squabbles. Is it possible to enjoy in such an abode any portion of that tranquillity so necessary to the Muses? For myself I cannot bear it." *

In truth, the town must have been worthy of its reverend inmates when even the presence of Laura could not soften its physical features nor cast a veil over its moral deformities in the imagination of a lover who might be supposed blind to every disagreeable object within the enchanted circle of her influence. All cotemporary authors condemn the licentiousness of ecclesiastics in these times: monks of different orders were at open war with each other and not always without bloodshed; the convents were tainted by calumny and filled with oppression; and lay corruption in its worst form was fully shared by every ecclesiastic from the pontiff downwards†. Notwithstanding this disgraceful conduct of churchmen, the pope's injustice, and their own bold opposition to it; the Florentines still maintained

* Dialogues, De Sade, Lib. iii., p. 110. † Muratori, Anno 1373.

a profound reverence for everything ecclesiastical; accompanied by strong superstitious impressions of the misfortunes that almost always seemed to follow those who withstood the Vicar of Christ even in the illegitimate exercise of his authority. Giovanni Magalotti one of the most daring, ablest, and honestest of the "EIGHT SAINTS" died during the interdict, but received all the comforts of religion notwithstanding, along with the honours of a tomb in Santa Croce and the talismanic word LIBERTAS inscribed on his monument: yet the sacrilege of that war hung heavy on the public mind, and superstition tremblingly observed that all the "EIGHT SAINTS" perished, and their families became extinct or dispersed within a very brief period after the peace of 1378*. Nor were the people less uneasy under the religious privations of the interdict; their devotion too deep too serious for this, apprehended a diminution of religious sentiment from long interruption of religious ceremonies; a forgetfulness of God, and a consequent relaxation of morality. The clergy were therefore compelled to resume their functions as though no anathema had ever been pronounced, it was declared of more importance to maintain a true knowledge of Christ in the public heart than bow to a pope who professing to be his earthly vicar neither obeyed his precepts nor followed his example †. But long ere they came to this bold resolution; the act of some of their abler spirits; compunction had troubled almost every heart: masses of penitent citizens of all degrees; men, women, and children assembled daily and nightly, praying weeping and singing in the various churches with bell, book, and candle; and processions of fifteen thousand at a time, not unaccompanied by relics and sacred music, and attended by numerous bands of flagellants amounting often to five thousand souls of every rank in the commonwealth! A hundred times as many in this way frequented the churches as were ever known to attend under ordinary circumstances, and many young and rich nobles struck

* Poggio, Lib. ii°, p. 58. † Poggio, Lib. ii., pp. 54, 55.



with sudden awe were disentangled from their errors and assembling at Fiesole fasted, distributed alms, prayed, slept on straw or the bare ground, converted others, dressed them in their own rich garments, supplied and repaired convents; even abandoned the world and issuing forth in numbers begged for the poorer class of religious houses. By all this enthusiasm they were desirous of proving that although their intention was to conquer the pope they were still most devoted servants of the church itself*.

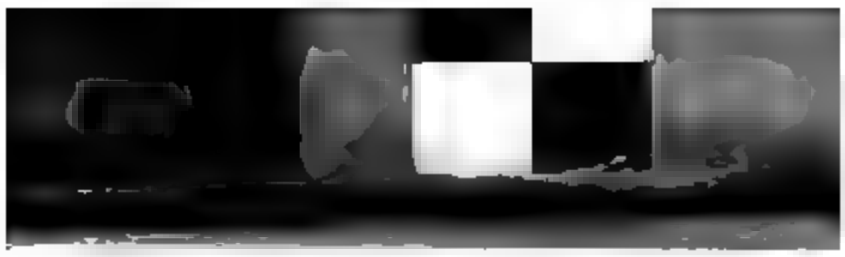
Thus even when excited by public wrongs the zeal of Florence was reverential and profound, but blended with an intense superstition from which few were exempted: at one moment, as we are told by a cotemporary; no less than twenty-five thousand people were to be seen bowed down in humble submission, not directly to the Almighty, but before a sacred exhibition of saintly relics with the holy portrait of Santa Maria in Pianeta at their head; and in solemn tones of deep contrition imploring her intercession to protect the city from impending danger†. The sight must have been imposing; sincerity is always so, whether in the mass or the individual. Nor was superstition confined to religion: the almost universal belief, and even in many of the more enlightened, the half confidence in judicial astrology, still pervaded every rank: many of the sounder intellects, such as Sacchetti, laughed this science to scorn, but it was nevertheless made a business of state policy; and no standard was delivered to the general; no incipient march of armies suffered, except under the auspices of astrological calculations, and a minute adherence to the soothsayer's commands. The most trifling accidents, such for instance as that of a high wind breaking the flag-staff of the gonfalon, or a fight amongst the public lions; as occurred in 1391 with the death of a male and female; accidents from lightning; thunder in an unclouded sky; or any other unusual occurrence, were

* M. di C. Stefani, Rub. 757. † Mem. Storiche di Ser Naddo, p. 106.

sufficient to cast a gloom over the whole community; and any sinister event that happened, although six months after, confirmed the strange belief*. Many of the lay religious companies were formed about this period, and the desire of relics was such, that the widow of a Florentine merchant who had stolen some from the emperor of Constantinople was rewarded by an annuity of 60 florins for presenting them to the republic †.

This deep devotion was not shared by every other Italian community: Padua and Venice are especially noted for a freedom of religious opinion that roused the anger of Petrarca who although an ecclesiastic was by no means a bigot, and always inclined to argue philosophically. He however asserted and lamented that all Italy was imbued with the opinions of Aristotle, but more profoundly and dangerously by those of his Arabian commentator Averroes of Cordova, who like him denied the existence of Providence and the creation of this world; laughed at the Bible, derided all religion, called that of Moses a childish superstition, that of Mahomet a swinish one, but Christianity the most absurd and insensate of all, for its God was at the same time both devoured and worshipped. Petrarca joined a society of these free-thinkers at Venice, who because he ridiculed their philosophy and infidelity, after a long and formal discussion amongst themselves, pronounced the damning sentence that was to wither all his laurels; namely, that he "*was a well-meaning man without literature* ‡"! The intellectual liberty of the flock seems, according to the same authority, to have been at least equalled by the ignorance of some of their principal pastors, more especially at Avignon where their influence was as unbounded as it was mischievous. Some of the cardinals are described as of very limited intellect, incapable

* S. Ammirato, Lib. xv., p. 828; Lib. xvi., p. 849.
† Cronaca d' Incerto, p. 211. — S. Ammirato, Lib. xvi., p. 839.
‡ De Sade, vol. iii., Lib. vi., pp. 655, 656, 659, 751, 760.

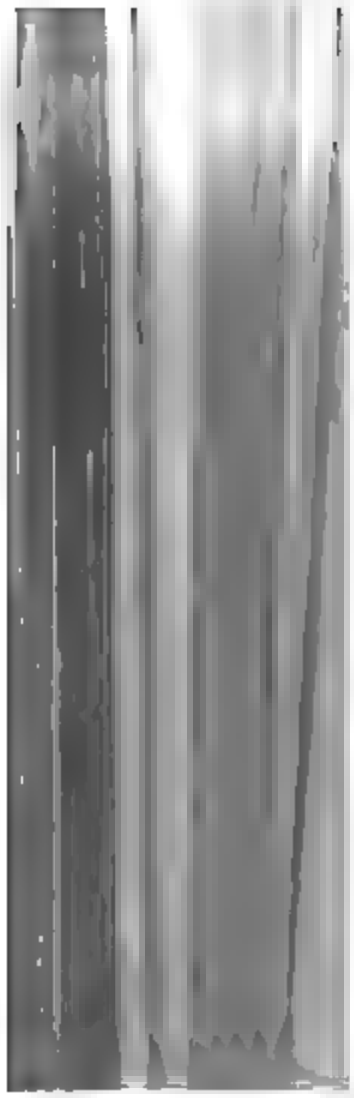


of their high duties and more to be pitied than blamed; others more enlightened, were hurried away by passions and self-interest without a thought for the public good, but a luxurious affection for France and hatred of Italy that influenced all their councils and kept the pontifical court in the trammels of that monarchy. Some were so ignorant as to believe that the church possessed nothing comparable to Avignon and its neighbourhood; that Italy rested on the world's confines, or a little beyond them; that it was encompassed by an unnavigable sea; that to pass the Alps was an impossible thing; and all beyond were objects of danger and suspicion even to the air, the water, the wine; and every other article of human sustenance.

Urban V. to whom Petrarch addresses this remonstrance, had won his good opinion by various incipient reforms; such as the abolition, or rather the restriction of the right of sanctuary, which up to this time was common to every cardinal's palace, within the precincts of which no officer of justice dared to enter: also the confining of ecclesiastics to one benefice and the reformation of luxurious habits amongst the priesthood, especially in their dress. "Who can calmly behold," he exclaims, "the fashion of horned shoes; heads decked out with wings; the hair tied in a tail; men's foreheads covered with those pins of ivory that women place in their hair; stomachs compressed by springs, (a species of torment suffered of old by the martyrs)?" to all of which, more particularly in Italy, he urged the pope to extend his reforming care*.

The Florentines as we have seen, notwithstanding their habitual reverence for the church scrupled not to levy contributions on it so heavy as to be almost incredible, except under the conviction of the clergy's riches being more abundant than what even in those joyous days of ecclesiastical prosperity can easily be conceived.

* Epistle to Urban V., De Sade, Lib. vi., p. 675, &c.



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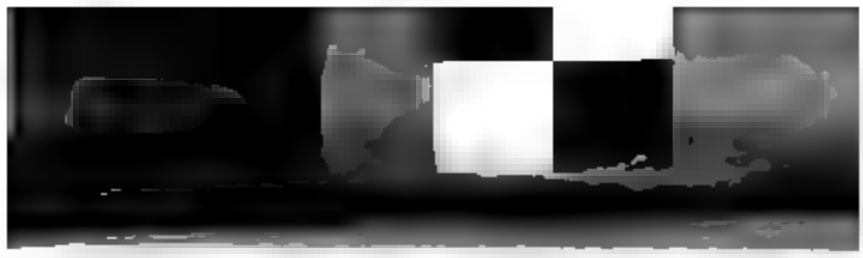

price for those that could pay; but the poor starved: Perugia, Siena, Lucca, Pistoia and many other places unable to sustain the pressure drove out their poor, while Florence not only repudiated this cruelty but supported the greater part of these outcasts in addition to her own suffering population. She imported wheat from Sicily to the port of Talamone in the Maremma, and with infinite danger and expense brought it safely to the capital: some came from Romagna and even Arezzo, and thus the price was kept down to half a florin a bushel in the market but mixed with one fourth of barley.

The madness of hunger continued so violent that public executioners were kept constantly attending the market of Orto-san-Michele, with the block and axe, to chop off the limbs of disorderly persons. This supply cost the government 60,000 florins in two years, and would have failed in its object if the sale of wheat had not been forbidden in the market and ready-made bread furnished instead, on account of the government. This was sold in certain appointed places at the rate of four danari for six ounces of mixed bread, and succeeded in mitigating the popular fury, as each individual could now purchase enough to avoid starvation, whereas previously, because a bushel was the smallest quantity sold, and the daily gains of some not more than eight or twelve danari of wages, many were totally precluded from the market. In consequence of this new arrangement, Villani, who proposed it and superintended the execution, tells us that the popular craving was soon in some measure abated, the multitude pacified, and the suffering borne with comparative equanimity, while the rich strained every nerve to diminish their distress, he is particular in its narration as a precedent for future times, and then gravely proceeds to inform us that whenever the planet Saturn is in the last degree of Cancer and until he arrive at

chino or florin of 71 grains. (Vide *Fineschi, Carestie e Dovizie di Firenze*) from an ancient MS. of the fourteenth century.—Florence, 1767.

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men and women trample
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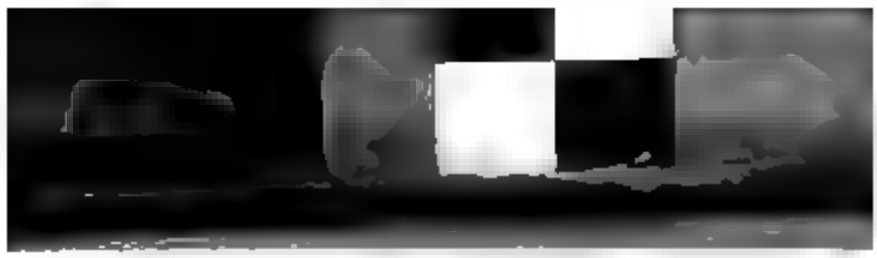


bench near one of the pilasters of the market-house and soon afterwards the retail business was commenced by corn-dealers who sold in small quantities according to the "*Mina*" or half bushel; the "*Quarto*" or half *Mina;* and the half *Quarto*. The *Staio* which is now considerably less than an English bushel varied at different periods of Florentine history as we learn from Dante and others, and was sometimes heaped up, sometimes only full measure*. Wheat in the Florentine market was of four kinds; namely, "*Calvello*" supposed to be the same as the ancient "*Carrellino*" of the Pisan market which consisted of those grains too large to pass through a certain sized sieve and therefore bearing a higher price. The second was Sicilian wheat and bore the second price: the third was the "*Grano Comunale*" or common Florentine wheat of the last harvest, sometimes called "*Grano Gentile*," which in times of scarcity was mixed with barley and other grain and then of course bore an inferior value: the fourth kind was denominated "*Grano Grosso*" or coarse wheat and bore the lowest price. These four sorts of wheat were exposed for sale in certain rush or wooden vessels called "*Bigonce*" of various dimensions, but generally holding from seven to eight bushels; of which three hundred might be seen in the market during favourable seasons, principally of foreign grain, for the Florentine district was not supposed in those days to average more than five months' consumption, although it had been known to produce enough for two years. The prices of these wheats were in the ratio of 30, 29, 28, and 27, when the best oats were 18½ soldi the bushel; but an attempt to limit the market price soon deprived it of any supply, the corn-dealers preferring the risk of a secret sale in their houses at more than the legal value. This seems for a moment to have opened the eyes of government, as a general license was finally issued

* Purgatorio, Canto xii; Paradiso, Canto xv.—Borghini, Vescovi di Firenze, vol. ii°, p. 537.

by proclamation for the making and sale of bread without reference to price, weight, or size; and in a very short time the public ovens were nearly abandoned, better bread being sold privately at a lower price; so sure is it that private necessity and energy, if left free, are the best purveyors, no matter how numerous the population; for numbers only multiply those minute channels and resources which like the capillary system in human bodies, maintain and nourish existence*. Besides the combination of mischief and inutility which is sure to proceed from the interference of government in the victualling trade of a settled community, it proved a heavy item of public expense to Florence which fell ultimately on the people in the guise of taxation. We have an interesting account of the receipts and expenditure of the republic from 1336 to 1338, during the costly war with Mastino della Scala when Arezzo and its contado, Pistoia, Colle, and eighteen walled towns in the Lucchese dominions were ruled by the Florentines, besides forty-six in their own territory, without counting those belonging to private citizens and a vast number of open towns and villages.

Little revenue accrued from the assessed taxation of Florence; her great income arose from duties on provisions and merchandise at the city gates with various duties under the general name of "*Gabelle*;" and in extraordinary circumstances by loans and imposts on merchants and other opulent citizens with assignments on the gabelle, which latter amounted to near 300,000 golden florins; an immense revenue in those days, and reckoned superior to that of Naples, Sicily, or Aragon†. The ordinary charges independent of soldiers' pay, which ceased almost instantaneously at the conclusion of a war or at a truce and formed nearly the sole advantage of employing mercenaries; amounted to less than 40,000 florins or

* Carestie e Dovizie di Firenze dal Padre Fineschi.
† Gio. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. xci., xcii.

only a little more than one-eighth of the revenue. On which Villani honestly exclaims, "O Florentines what bad and wicked "providence is it to increase the public revenue with the sub- "stance and poverty of the citizens by forced taxes, in order "to support foolish enterprises! Know you not that where "the sea is wide, great are the tempests; and that with aug- "mented revenues come evil expenses? Temper, my dearest "brethren, your inordinate desires and please God; and "oppress not an innocent people"*.

Giovanni Villani's detailed statement of the revenue and expenses of Florence is also given with some variations by the Fra Ildefonso di San Luigi, in the twelfth volume of the "*Delizie degli Eruditi Toscani*" amongst the "*Monumenti*" to Stefani's History, taken from some manuscript memoirs of Florentine History in the library of San Paulino, which interesting documents will not be misplaced in this chapter. Villani's account is here given (with occasional additions from the former) because he assures us that it was copied by himself out of the public books, the income being counted in golden florins of seventy-two grains of gold each, at twenty-four carats.

REVENUE of the FLORENTINE REPUBLIC from 1336 to 1338.

	Florins.
"Gabelle" or exit and entrance tolls at the Gates of Florence on victuals, merchandise, and other commodities. Farmed annually at	90,200
Gabella, or duty on the retailers of wine equal to one-third of the value	58,300
"*Estimo*" or tax on real property in the contado . .	30,100
Carry forward	178,600

* Gio. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. xciv.

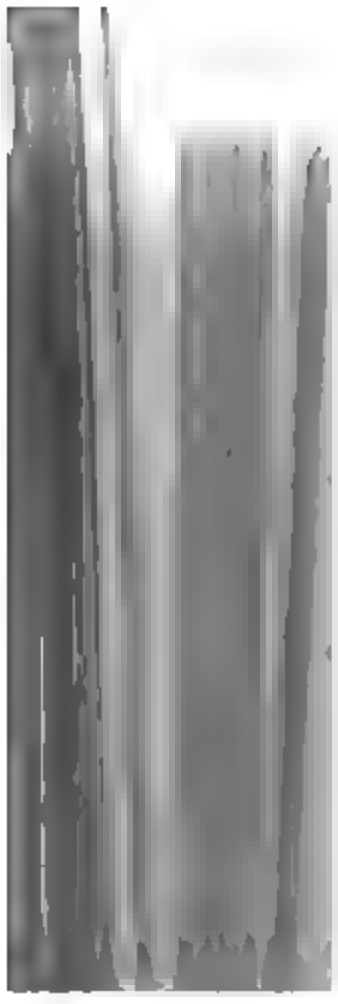
	Florins.
Brought forward	178,690
Gabella on salt, which was sold at 40 soldi a staio to the citizens, and at half that price to the rural population . .	14,450
These four *Gabelle* were appropriated to maintain the Lombard war against Mastino de la Scala, and came to . .	193,050
The rents of exiles' and condemned persons' property . .	7000
Gabella on lenders and usurers	3000
Charge on certain country gentlemen called Nobili del Contado	2000
Gabella or duty on contracts, mortgages, &c. . . .	20,000
Do. on all beasts for slaughter in the city . . .	15,000
Do. do. do. in the contado . . .	4400
Do. on letting of lodgings, houses, &c. . . .	4150
Do. on flour and grinding mills	4250
Do. on those citizens appointed to high offices abroad, podestàs, &c.	3500
Do. on accusations and defences	1400
Profits on gold coinage, all expenses paid, came to . .	2300
Do. on the smaller money	1500
Rents of public property, tolls on ferry-boats, &c. . .	1600
Gabella on the live-cattle merchants of Florence . . .	2000
Do. on the stamps of weights and measures, and peaces between private citizens	600
Do. on the sweepings of the corn market of Orto San Michele, and the hire of bigonce or corn-tubs .	750
Do. on country lodgings	550
Do. on country markets	2000
Realisation of fines and penalties, which generally amount to a great deal more than	20,000
Payments in lieu of military service both horse and foot, not counting those in Lombardy	7000
Gabella on the porches and projections of shops . . .	7000
Do. on the green-grocers of Florence . . .	450
Do. on licences to carry arms at 20 soldi a head . .	1300
Rent of prisons or prisoners (!)	1000
The Gabella on police messengers	100
Do. on the timber rafts floated up the Arno . .	50
Carry forward	305,750

	Florins.
Brought forward	305,750
Gabella of the inspectors of securities given to government .	250
Do. on the fees of the consuls of trades, government's share	300
Do. on the country possessions of citizens*.	
Gabella on fighting without weapons (boxing) *.	
Do. on those who have no town house, only a country residence	1000
Do. on the mills and fisheries *.	
Total revenue minus the marked items . .	307,300

EXPENSES OF FLORENCE FROM 1336 TO 1338 IN LIRE, OF WHICH THREE AND TWO SOLDI WERE THEN EQUAL TO A GOLDEN FLORIN.

	Lire.
The salary of the podestà and his suite, yearly . .	15,240
Do. of the captain of the people, and his officers attendants, &c.	5880
Do. of the executor of the ordinances of justice against the great with his officers and attendants . .	4900
Salary of the conservator of the people, and over the restored exiles with fifty cavalry and one hundred infantry, a temporary and extraordinary office soon abolished . . .	26,040
The judge of appeals on the rights of the state . . .	1100
The officer executing the sumptuary laws, &c. . .	1000
The superintendent of the market of Orto-San-Michele and the Piazza della Badia	1300
The superintendent of soldiers' pay and their messengers . .	1000
The officers, notaries, and attendants superintending the defects of soldiers; *i. e.*, the real number on service . . .	250
The public treasurers, their officers, notaries, monks, &c., who have charge of the public acts	1400
The officers in charge of the rents of public domains . .	200
Jailors and prison guards	800
The table of the priors and their officers and suite . .	3600
Carry forward	62,710

* These are uncertain in one account, and not given by Villani, therefore omitted. Those given amount to 50,000 florins, which seems to be an error.



The notary of the reformations	
The chancellor or secretary of t	
To keep of lions ; torches ; can	
The registering notary of the pu	
The police and messengers of th	
The public trumpeters ; six pu	
drummers, sounders of the *S*	
ment now gone by) bagpipers	
all ten, with silver trumpets	
Alms to religious mendicants an	
Six hundred city night guards	
The *Palio* or prize of silk or velv	
John's day, and those of cloth fo	
and Santa Reparata	
Public messengers and spies empl	
Ambassadors' salaries	
Governors and guards of fortresse	
For supplying the public armoury	
large shields (*Palvesi*)	
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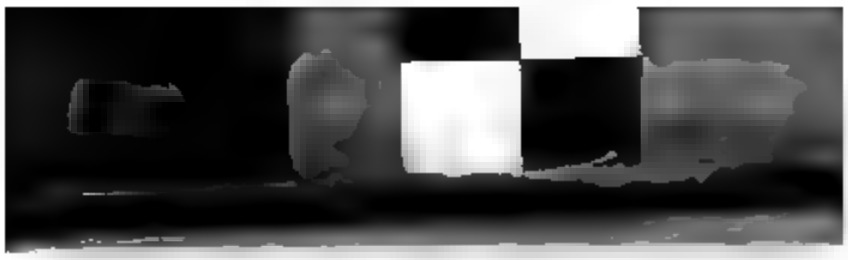


It will be seen that none of the great officers of state within the city, except foreigners, received any salaries, and yet the struggles for office were fierce and bloody, for power is a stronger stimulant than riches to the ambitious mind and the notion of unpaid public duties in a large community is perhaps more theoretically beautiful than practically correct. We do not find that the public administration of Florence was maintained in greater purity or efficiency under this seemingly disinterested practice; that there was less peculation, nepotism, partiality, or vengeance; more rigorous justice, or security from private or public oppression; wiser counsels, calmer deliberations, greater economy, or more lasting tranquillity. Neither does it appear that the struggle for salaried offices and governments without the walls was less general, or violent,or more patriotic, or disinterested than in other places; some offices seem indeed to have lost the assistance of efficient men from fear of the attendant expense, and it was at one time difficult to procure ambassadors for the public service until the salary was raised and a coercive law promulgated on the subject.

Sismondi asserts with a friendly leaning towards the Florentine government; that in republics the honour of governing is sufficient recompense for the trouble, and when good reputation is the sole remuneration of magistrates none of them will be negligent in attempting to acquire it: if on the contrary they are paid, their principal end is accomplished and their labour is not fruitless for themselves, although they may not have deserved either the people's love or the respect of posterity. This is the very poetry of human government: for when was the disinterested love of honest fame ever willingly accepted as the *sole* remuneration of magistrates, or generally felt as the *only* incentive to public office? Have not those higher spirits whom, from time to time, such feelings have actuated and who form exceptions to the rule, been singled out from the crowd and sent down to posterity as bright and extraordinary examples

of private virtue and public patriotism? And if good renown be a powerful excitement to official virtue, why should its influence wither under the comfortable warmth of an honest remuneration? Would not a man of integrity rather double his exertion in the public service, if his mind were at ease about the private necessities and future provision of his family?

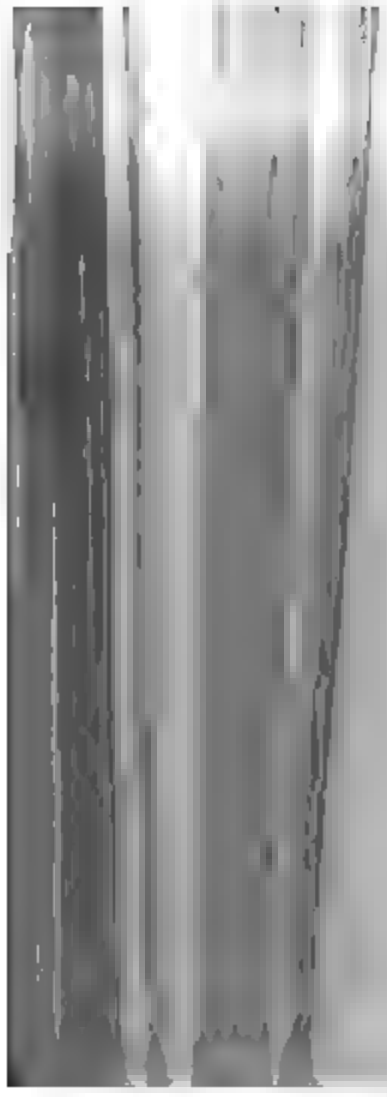
The general state of Florence at this period presents a picture of glowing prosperity; but the city alone was "*the state*," to which everything external beyond the contado administered, and was almost sacrificed. There were twenty-five thousand males from fifteen to seventy able to bear arms as national militia, and all citizens; this necessarily excluded a multitude of the mere people who were not freemen. Amongst the former were fifteen hundred noble and powerful citizens who under the general title of "*Grandi*" became subject to the ordinances of justice. There were seventy-five *Cavalieri di Corredo*, or belted knights; a great diminution from the older days of aristocratic rule when no less than two hundred and fifty enjoyed that high distinction. But when democracy gained the ascendant its antagonist order fell so considerably in power and dignity that comparatively few of them coveted this distinguished honour. It was supposed by Villani that Florence contained ninety-four thousand inhabitants, of which fifteen hundred were soldiers and foreigners in transit, and exclusive of religious orders. He makes this estimate from the quantity of bread necessary to supply the city; a very inaccurate measure between the unequal portions of rich and poor, between waste and economy, want and superfluity; and unless he, as is probable, excluded the suburbs which were large and populous, is far below the mark for we are assured by Boccaccio that one hundred thousand people died of the plague alone in 1348 without counting the previous thinning out by famine and yet the city was not completely depopulated. Sismondi is probably more accurate in estimating the popula-

tion at a hundred and fifty thousand; and eighty thousand able to carry arms in the contado and district. The latter is perhaps under the mark if Goro Dati can be believed, for he asserts that a force of one hundred thousand militia could be assembled on any point within the state at three days' notice in 1392, and that eighty thousand were actually marched on Arezzo, as we have seen, to secure its evacuation by the Sire de Coucy. It was found by the black and white beans kept in the church of San Giovanni as respective registers of male and female baptisms, that the yearly average was from five thousand five hundred to six thousand, there being generally from three to five hundred more males than females.

There were from eight to ten thousand children of both sexes learning to read: from a thousand to twelve hundred studying arithmetic in six schools; and between five and six hundred at grammar and logic in four great seminaries.

There were a hundred and ten churches in the town and suburbs, including those of the regular orders, and comprising fifty-seven parishes: five abbeys; two priories containing eighty monks: twenty-four female convents with about five hundred nuns: ten different orders of friars: thirty hospitals with a thousand beds for the poor and infirm; (a fine feature of the national character); and from two hundred and fifty to three hundred priestly chaplains.

The work-shops of the wool-trade amounted to more than two hundred, and from seventy to eighty thousand pieces of cloth were annually manufactured, to the value of 1,200,000 florins, one-third of which remained in Florence as remuneration for the labour of thirty thousand workmen employed in this trade, independent of masters' profits. Thirty years before, there were three hundred workshops belonging to this trade and more than a hundred thousand pieces of cloth were annually manufactured, but of a coarser quality and only half the value; because at that time no English wool was used nor did the



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100,000 golden Borins
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The college of Judges
notaries of six hundred,
the apothecaries' shops
and mercers abounded;
were innumerable; of
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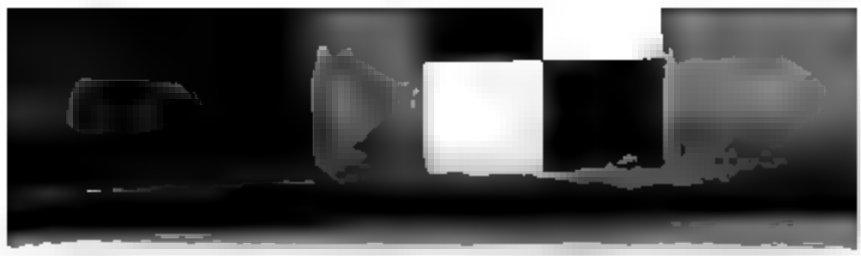


Villani, the following foreign officers administered justice in Florence, each with the power of torture. Namely the "Podestà;" the "Captain of the People;" the "Defender of the People and the Trades;" the "Executor of the Ordinances of Justice," and the "Captain of the Guard or Conservator of the people" who had more authority than the others; but all could inflict personal punishment. Besides these there were the Judge of Rights and Appeals; the Judge of the Gabelle; the presiding officer in the Court of Female Ornaments; the head officer in the Commercial Court; the Director of the Wool-trade; the Ecclesiastical Officers; the two Bishops' Courts of Florence and Fiesole, and the Inquisition; all showing what a vast quantity of executive and judicial power was in the hands of foreigners, who if free from local partiality were also free from local shame and not exempt from the influence of local authority.

Florence was at this period well studded with handsome dwellings; the citizens were continually building, repairing, altering, and embellishing their houses; adding every day to their ease and comforts, and introducing improvements from foreign nations. Sacred architecture of every kind partook of this taste; and there was no popular citizen or nobleman but either had built or was building fine country palaces and villas, far exceeding their city residence in size and magnificence; so that many were accounted crazy for their extravagance.

"And so magnificent was the sight," says Villani, "that strangers unused to Florence on coming from abroad when they beheld the vast assemblage of rich buildings and beautiful palaces with which the country was so thickly studded for three miles round the ramparts, believed that all was city like those within the Roman walls; and this was independent of the rich palaces, towers, courts and walled gardens at a greater distance, which in other countries would be denominated castles. In short," he continues, "it is estimated that within a circuit of

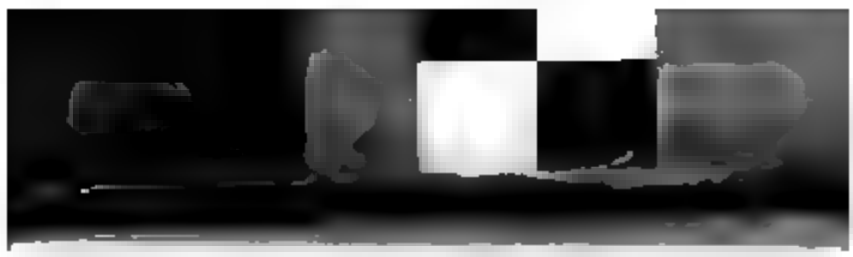
six miles round the town there are rich and noble dwellings enough to make two cities like Florence"*. And Ariosto seems to have caught the same idea when he exclaims

"A veder pien di tante ville i colli,
Par che 'l terren ve le germogli come
Vermene germogliar suol, 'e rampolli:
Se dentro un mur sotto un medesmo nome
Fosser raccolti i tuoi Palazzi sparsi
Non ti sarian da pareggiar due Rome"†.

This growing taste for building although a natural consequence of commercial prosperity was probably accelerated by the repeated action of sumptuary laws, which in restricting personal expense and sensual gratification gave a new direction and more intellectual character to taste. By forcing the opulent into a nobler line of expenditure, that surplus riches which by us is generally dissipated in ostentatious, cumbrous, and yet ephemeral amusements, was by them more commonly employed to encourage the fine arts. And as amongst these architecture is that which presents itself most frequently and majestically to general observation; in which artisans of every rank and genius are employed and therefore more or less judges of its excellence; which is soonest felt and most easily comprehended as an index of safety ease and comfort, as well as a pleasing union of strength, symmetry, and utility; it would naturally become an early and favoured art even without any warlike necessity, by a people such as the Florentines. It would moreover as it were, *demand* the kindred aid of both painting and sculpture which with magic touch enhance those

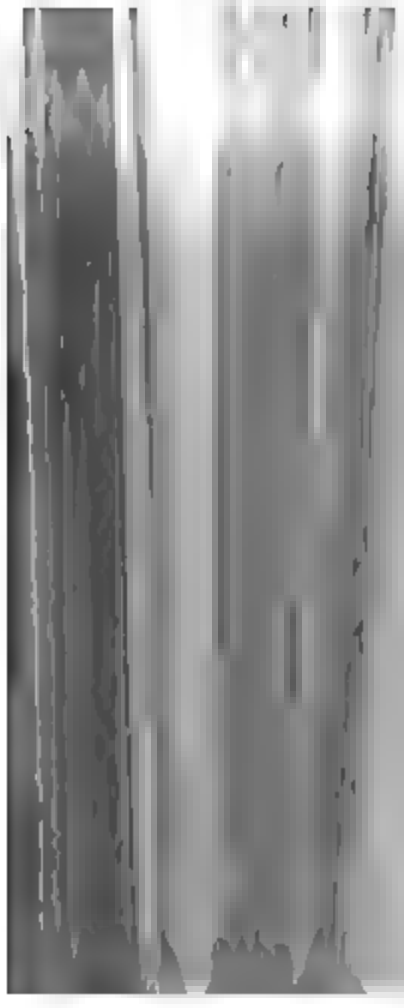
* G. Villani, Lib. xi., cap. xciv.—Delizie degli Eruditi Toscani, vol xii., Monumenti.

† While gazing on thy villa-studded hills
'Twould seem as though the earth grew palaces
As she is wont by nature to bring forth
Young shoots, and leafy plants, and flowery shrubs:
And if within one wall and single name
Could be collected all thy scattered halls,
Two Romes would scarcely form thy parallel.



beauties that soften its rigid mathematical character and give to it a conspicuous station in the march of human refinement. Hence probably their triple union, often accompanied by poetry, in most artists of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries: yet architecture independent of its utility, must always hold a subordinate station as a mere intellectual effort, inasmuch as the original idea may be endlessly copied and multiplied by inferior minds without sacrificing a spark of the author's genius though the prototype were annihilated. But neither the copy of a painting or a statue, any more than the translation of a fine poem, can be animated with all the lofty spirit of original inspiration: an inferior mind will fail in the attempt; a superior, if it condescend to copy, will absorb the idea and make the work its own. Florentine taste and genius first generated artists and were in turn attracted by the bold creative spirit they produced; for whatever evils spring from a turbulent democracy, and their name is legion; it was on the whole a more noble and impressive condition, more in unison with the dignity of man than the forced tranquillity and painful submission of their lord-bestridden neighbours. The mental energies were at least unfettered, the doors of knowledge opened; and whether for good or evil the human intellect bounded and rebounded uncontrolled to the utmost spring of its natural elasticity. This freedom of intellectual life invigorated every class; was felt in every occupation and pursuit; and according as it was more or less governed by passion, often produced a thrilling contrast of the dark and brilliant points of national character. In this living spirit the artists largely shared; for genius is ever bold, and Florence prized her liberty of speech as moderns do the press, wherefore as authors statesmen or artists the acts of public men were never spared by public censure.

The same spirit that in the high-reaching ambitious citizen broke forth in turbulence and blood, carried those of mildest



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At this period also a
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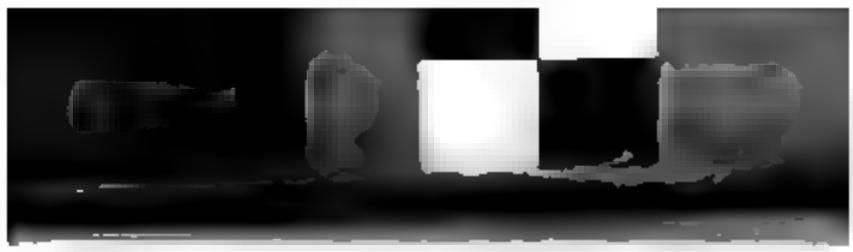


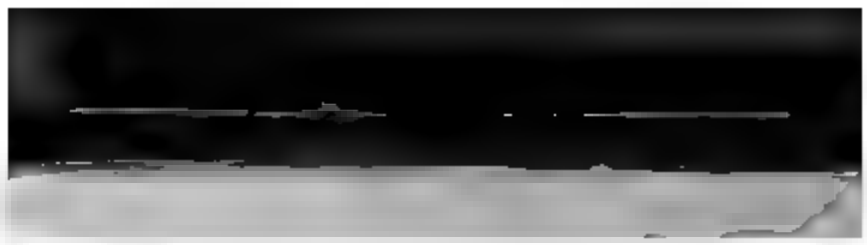
defiance of every moral and physical difficulty completed the present stupendous dome without the aid of centering; a work, said Michael Angelo, "most difficult to copy and impossible to surpass," he did not live to see the church completed even to its present state, and a hundred and seventy-six years intervened from its foundation to the final elevation of the ball. The cost although now uncertain must have been enormous; that of the belfry-tower alone, if the antiquarian Migliore can be credited, amounted to 11,000,000 golden florins! But this statement though followed by subsequent writers will not gain so much credit as the more comprehensible assertion that Florence expended a greater sum of money on her public buildings than she did in all her wars *.

Happy for the world if such examples were more frequently imitated! Neither had Giotto the satisfaction of finishing his own tower which he intended to surmount with a lofty marble spire reaching about a hundred and ninety-two feet above the present elevation, an addition that would have run up this graceful edifice to about four hundred and fifty nine feet. His pupil Taddeo Gaddi afterwards wished to carry this into effect but the Florentines forbid it as being too antiquated. Too antiquated! as if anything containing within itself the real ingredients of beauty could ever be too antiquated for a correct taste †.

The vast fabric of Santa Croce although commenced in the preceding century was only brought to its actual state by Arnolfo di Cambio in 1320. In the fifteenth century Castello Guaratesi a public-spirited citizen offered and actually began to complete the front at his own expense but being disgusted by the Board of Works, which refused a place for his family arms amongst the embellishments, discontinued his aid; yet when

* Fer Migliore, Firenze Illustrata.—Luigi Biadi, Fabbriche non terminate.—S. Ammirato, Lib. xvi., p. 833.

† Luigi Biadi, Fabbriche non terminate.

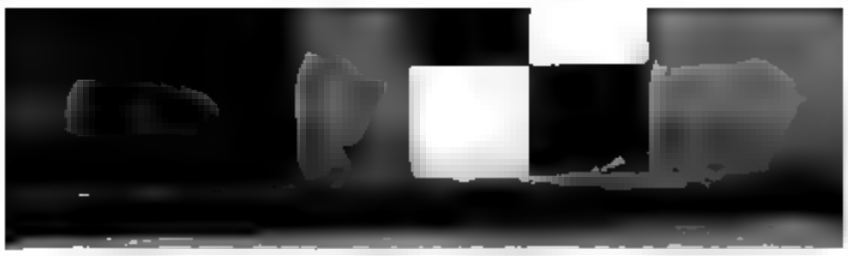


the ancient belfry tower was ruined by a hurricane in 1514, forgiving all former discourtesy Castello again offered his funds to erect a new one under the same conditions, and was again refused *.

The usual ceremony of renewing the supreme magistracy of Florence, which generally took place on the Ringhera or platform before the public palace occasioned another beautiful specimen of Florentine architecture: this ceremony was often interrupted by heavy rains, and as a remedy for the inconvenience Andrea Orcagna was employed to build the still existing Portico or Loggia de' Lanzi on the site of houses belonging to the Figliamochi and Baroncelli families. It was first called the Loggia della Piazza, but after the fall of republican Florence served as a guardhouse for the German *Lanzi* or Lansquenets of the grand-ducal guard, and thence its present appellation. It was the admiration of Michelangelo who afterwards proposed to continue this lofty and magnificent Portico round the public Place which in 1386 had been paved with brick; and thus he would have rendered it one of the handsomest architectural squares in Europe †.

It might be expected that the fine arts would have escaped the taint of faction: but it was not so: the names of Guelph and Ghibeline or popular and imperial parties, everywhere served as a cloak for private enmity and political intrigue and like those of the nobles and people were frequently subdivided into smaller factions by the clashing interests and private enmity of powerful clans which so often deluged the Italian cities with blood. The contending factions were distinguished by their dress, their devices, colours, and sometimes even in the manner of folding their napkins; but especially in the peculiar form of the battlements of their towers and palaces, which were either square or pointed according to the political sect of the

* L. Biadi, Fabbriche non terminate. Lib. xv., p. 776.—Cinelli, Bellezze di Firenze, p. 71.
† S. Ammirato, Lib. xiii., p. 669;



owner. Such harmless signs of party were pardonable, but the blood of relations and companions was made to flow without scruple or remorse, and the most cruel tortures were reciprocally inflicted when actual power allowed of deliberate vengeance; a passion which they carried even beyond the grave, by putting their enemies to death without confession on purpose to enjoy the imaginative pleasure of their perpetual forment in another world *!

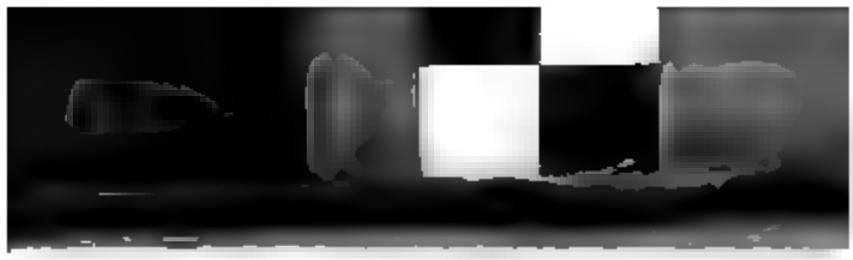
Of military architecture, excepting the common mural defences with an occasional citadel, the more elaborate specimens must be sought, rather amongst those states which had lost their liberty, of which these fortresses were the tombs and emblems, than in Florence and other independent republics. In Lombardy, Romagna, and in Tuscany are still to be seen some of these strongholds of ancient tyranny; but the two existing shackles of Florence are of a more modern date, and though once grim and bristling, are now useless for the defence of an absolute prince who is not a tyrant.

The regular military establishment of Florence was hardly sufficient to garrison, and more as keepers than soldiers, the citadels of her fortified towns and numerous strongholds: having free communication with the country these citadels required only feeble detachments, and could easily be succoured although the town were in open insurrection or even occupied by an enemy. In fact no state could then have kept all its strongholds fully garrisoned, for every hamlet was inclosed by stoccades, or mounds, or ditches; or with what generally prevailed in small places, a strong connected circumvallation composed of the back-walls of dwelling houses, each family guarding its own and keeping a watch from lofty windows which served as loopholes for defence, and commanded the adjacent country. Excepting the villas of opulent citizens which in fact were castles, there were but few insulated houses; the whole

* Cebrario, Economia Politica, p. 49.

rural population congregating in walled towns or villages called "*Castelli*;" and "*Rocche*" when built in elevated positions amongst the hills. They were defended exclusively by their inhabitants and served as asylums for all moveable property the growing crops alone being left open to an enemy. War therefore, as in the previous age, continued to be a mere succession of inroads accompanied by fire devastation and plunder, which lasted one, two, or three months with the capture of a few places by force or treachery; but no long stay could be made, no lasting conquest; no army could long subsist which destroyed its own nourishment; where every man was an enemy and every march a siege. Booty was necessarily the principal object, after mischief, and therefore few pitched battles ennobled these predatory excursions. Neither could battle be easily given without a mutual agreement between the belligerent forces, for each in its entrenchments was safe from the attack of heavy-armed cavalry in which the great strength of armies then consisted; and the least obstacle, even of rough ground, was sufficient to check them, so that by mutual coöperation a broad and level space was always prepared for the combat, but only after a formal defiance by heralds accompanied with insult, ridicule, or compliments; and so answered, according to the prevailing humour of the chiefs. These actions were seldom bloody, for the men-at-arms and their heavy horses were wrapped in steel, and though encountering with prodigious force and often unhorsed were seldom wounded, while Plutus in the form of ransom exercised the function of mercy. Sometimes however the more deadly passions prevailed, and then a poniard adapted to this especial purpose bearing the significant appellation of "*misericordia*" soon cut through the helmet straps and dispatched the vanquished.

Heavy-armed cavalry whether knights or simple men-at-arms were each well supported by a certain number of light-armed followers as long as they stood their ground, but the



chief once defeated all were vanquished unless engaged with the antagonist followers. The death or capture of a single man-at-arms thus involved defeat to several under the denomination of a "*Lance.*" The number attached to a lance varied at different periods from its first introduction with three men by Hawkwood until they increased to six in the following century when it appears to have become a simple matter of bargain.

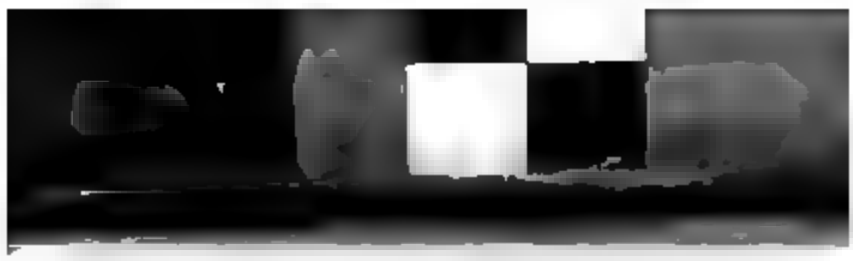
By a document cited in Cibrario's work we find that the Duchess of Savoy in 1475 engaged Colluccio de Grifis of Calabria with twenty-five lances at four horses for each lance and amongst them a man-at-arms completely armed in the Italian manner with a supporter and an assistant; the former to be furnished with a crossbow besides a corselet and lance or partizan: and another supporter with lance in hand. For every such lance he was to receive twenty Savoyard florins a month paid quarterly besides the pay of five more for his table-money and personal remuneration. He was to serve the Duchess one year, either in or out of Italy, be obedient to all her commands, deliver up to her any general or high public functionary that he might capture, as well as all towns and castles that should fall into his hands *.

The admirable organisation of the Florentine militia already mentioned on the authority of Goro Dati ought to have insured a formidable arm of defence in a period of almost continual alarms if their efficiency had been duly attended to, because from their local knowledge and habitual use of weapons they could defend mountain passes and town walls and even act in the field along with regular troops; but singly opposed to disciplined mercenaries they seem never to have accomplished anything or saved a single florin of forced contribution to the government.

The mercenary soldiers, although always more or less employed in Italy, were earliest and most frequently engaged by

* *Luigi Cibrario*, Economia Politica del Medio Evo, capo lx.

opulent and powerful prelates and convents when it was considered indecorous for churchmen to take the field in person unless bound to do so as feudal barons. The Catalans and other Spaniards, first led into Sicily and Calabria by Frederic of Aragon against the house of Anjou, after their dismissal made war a trade, part repairing to Greece as already noticed under the name of the "*Great Company*" while others remained in Italy, and at the beginning of the fourteenth century gave their name of *Catalan* to every sort of mercenary soldier of whatever nation. Then followed Guarniere, Montreal, Lando, Baumgarten, Hawkwood, the Bretons, the first company of Saint George, the Stella, King Louis's Hungarian cavalry, and a poisonous sprinkling of minor adventurers, all existing by rapine and under no curb but that amount of discipline essential to the successful issue of their rapacity. During the fourteenth century Italy learned from these a terrible lesson, acquired a congenial taste, and was aroused by a new and fearful spirit: she joined, emulated, and even surpassed the strangers in their own sanguinary course, and finally planted the seeds of modern tactics and the present art of war. The mischief of this system is plain: its advantages were the prompt assemblage of a disciplined army at a known cost, and its no less instantaneous dismissal when hostilities ceased: no pensions, no claims of service, no provision for widows and children afterwards incommoded the state; the troops were bought for a price and a period, and the general could mature his plans without fear of his followers leaving him at the end of thirty or forty days, or of their refusing to follow beyond a certain point perhaps in the moment of victory: nor was the inconvenience of leaving their business and social enjoyments less felt by the burghers; so that the inducements were strong, but far outbalanced by an accumulation of national evils which reduced Italy nearly to the condition of a subjugated country. The military power of the general was great, and apparently



uncontrolled except by the government he served; even to the infliction of capital punishment on men and officers of the highest rank and independence; but it was sometimes dangerous to exercise it. The Florentine commander Bernardone della Serre beheaded in 1397 the chief of a powerful band of mercenaries called Bartolommeo Boccanera of Prato, who after several acts of disrespect and insubordination presumed to disobey his commands: this from the offender's high rank almost created a mutiny, more especially as many thought it not unmixed with personal enmity; but he was upheld by the Seignory *. Notwithstanding this universal employment of mercenary troops, no man able to bear arms was exempt from service on emergencies; and these general levies were sometimes so rigidly enforced that every citizen was compelled to appear under arms in the camp before the "Campana" had ceased to sound, or before a waxen taper placed on the city gate was entirely consumed; and thus both men and arms were supplied but not soldiers, nor sometimes willing partisans.

The military trade was seductive, dissolute, lucrative, inspiriting, and therefore popular amongst the idle and unprofessional, and the poor nobility; different motives acted on different characters, but the wealth and distinction of successful condottieri tempted every rank in Italy from the prince to the peasant. Foreign leaders and soldiers who up to the middle of this century monopolised the Italian war-trade, had, at its termination, almost entirely given way to native troops and commanders †. The Ordelaffi, Malatesti, Varani, Visconti and others first joined the foreign bands and battened, in common with strangers, on the misery of their native land; but Alberigo count of Barbiano in the Bolognese state, was the first Italian Prince who raised an exclusively national company under the banner of Saint George, which equalled the others in

* Leon. Aretino, Lib. x.—Scip. Ammirato, Lib. xvi., p. 860.
† Muratori, Antic. Italiane, Dis. 26.

wickedness but excelled them in military talent. In 1377 with two hundred lances he took a willing part in the horrors of Cesina, and two years after while serving Pope Urban VI. defeated the Bretons, the Antipope Clement VII.'s company, at San Marino, and thus established his fame and fortunes.

This company soon became the school of Italian soldiers, and ere the century finished many distinguished native leaders issued from its ranks: Jacopo del Verme the son of a celebrated captain had already distinguished himself under the Venetian banners in their eastern wars; but Bianciardo, Facino Cane, Otto-Bon-Terzo, Broglio, Biordo, Cecolino di Michelotti; and finally Braccio di Montone who became a celebrated master in war, are all said to have been more or less formed in the school of Alberigo; but a far more fortunate chieftain, the elder Sforza, and therefore his still more celebrated son, issued also from the same academy *.

The pay of a lance at this period was some inducement, independent of other attractions, to follow the military profession: according to Salviati it was from 13 to 16 florins a month on which however there appears to have been heavy charges: three horses and arms for three men were a great and necessary expense, if not paid, as they seem to have sometimes been, by a separate allowance; the price of soldiers fluctuating like other marketable commodities with the demand and supply.

The price of a war horse varied from about sixty to near two hundred pounds of the present day in the last quarter of this century: a Ronzino cost from twenty-one to twenty-four pounds: its saddle thirty-one shillings; and the daily expense of a horse's keep at an inn was one and sevenpence halfpenny, of which the hay and oats amounted to about a shilling; a pair of spurs cost upwards of five shillings; a bridle twelve and a penny; a courser's bit more than fifteen; a pair of page's stirrups eight and fourpence; a mule's bridle ornamented, about

* Paulo Giovio Vite.

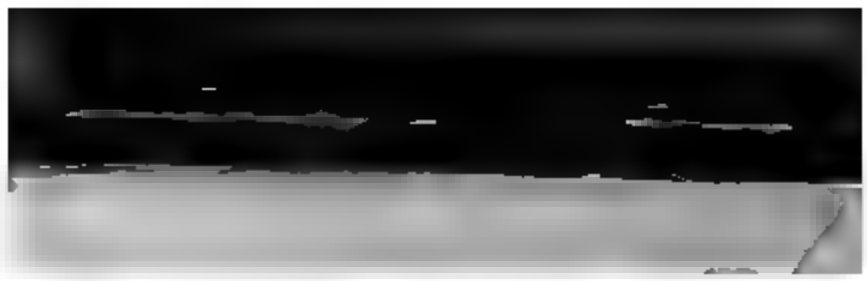
thirty-eight shillings; the animal itself from twelve to twenty-five pounds, and other similar commodities in proportion: amongst them we find that twelve skins of red Florentine leather for making scabbards, sword ornaments, and covering saddles, cost upwards of seven pounds five shillings of the present day.

Mutton was threepence half-penny, beef twopence farthing and veal twopence three farthings a pound at Turin in 1374. A hen cost tenpence, a capon twopence half-penny more; a pullet fourpence farthing; a cow between two and three pounds: and a calf two guineas, in the year 1352. Thirty-two years after a Turin pound of lard cost six farthings; a pound of tallow candles tenpence three farthings; and an ox-tongue about sixpence in 1391. Oxen sometimes rose to 11*l.* each.

In the first quarter of the same century we find a new winch crossbow costing more than seven pounds twelve and sixpence; nearly five pounds twelve given for two hundred shafts to supply it, and about two pounds for a thousand iron arrow-heads.

Cloth for clothing the poor cost to the hospitals in Savoy about twenty-seven pence halfpenny an ell, of native manufacture, and about the same quantity of white Irish serge ("*saia*," Poplin?) cost five and fivepence farthing in 1343. Writing-paper was nearly two-and-sixpence a quire in 1352. A pound of sugar from Negropont cost about eight shillings. A pair of cuirasses, (perhaps the back and breast-plate) nearly two pounds eleven shillings; a longbow cost at Venice between seventeen and eighteen shillings; jack-boots one pound nine shillings the pair in 1375, and about the same time a pair of white leather shoes for riding, cost two-and-sixpence three farthings: a steel hauberk nearly thirty-one pounds and a glass chamber vase sevenpence *.

* These were much used in the fourteenth century, probably to facilitate medical judgment of disease, which in those days was formed principally on the appearance of the water without seeing the patient.

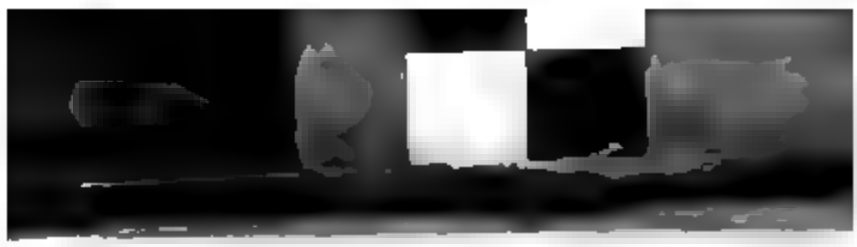


Common lances for light-armed infantry cost about two shillings each; a pair of gauntlets one guinea, a proof corslet of steel twenty-four pounds; a coat of mail thirty pounds and a dozen of arrows three pounds. An ordinary crossbow about twenty-five shillings and the better sort two guineas. The cost of four galleys given by Galeazzo Visconte to Amedeus of Savoy in 1366 was about 7824*l.* sterling. Tiles in 1384 cost about three-and-sixpence the hundred and bricks about twenty-seven shillings a thousand. The common wages of a day labourer about the middle of this century in Savoy were from fifteenpence to seventeenpence half-penny a day in the present currency of that state; but some were as low as fivepence farthing for the mere carrying of stones; while a carpenter received about two-and-tenpence and a crossbow maker nearly seven shillings per diem. In 1340 however the average wages of common day-labourers in Savoy was from threepence half-penny to fourpence a day of the present money, and the average of wheat something more than half its present money value. The foregoing particulars have been roughly taken from the Cavaliere Luigi Cebrario's very interesting and laborious work on the political economy of the middle ages and will enable the reader to form a comparison between the pay and principal expenses of condottieri *.

If his calculation of the value of money be correct, measured as it is by the price of wheat, the present price of necessaries in Piedmont is not more than double that of the fourteenth century; and this, if the ancient "*Staio*" or bushel measure of Florence were equal to the modern one, seems to be corroborated by the old records of that republic.

The wandering military adventurers of these unsettled times were probably better paid than any other class, for they were in almost constant requisition, and not of a temper to starve when out of employment from any conscientious scruples about

* Cebrario, Economia Politica del Medio Evo, Turin, 1839.



the appropriation of their neighbours' property. These knights-errant were assembled and sometimes paid by individual leaders to the number of from twenty to thirty in a band; a petty baron with a few vassals, and even single men-at-arms under the names of "*Lanzi Spezzati*" and "*Briganti*," offered themselves for hire in the military market; and when once in the field their numbers seldom diminished; for they either joined the standard of greater companies or with augmented forces negotiated as independent chieftains.

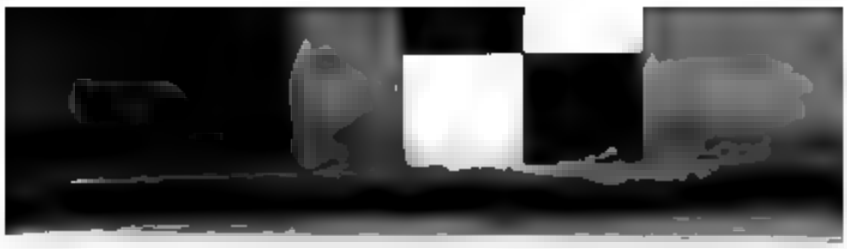
The foot-soldier, under various names according to his arms or country, began especially in mountain warfare, to be more prized towards the middle of this century; and the regular infantry under the name of "*Clients*" were generally armed with a cuirass or coat of mail, a heavy buckler and an iron skull-cap; their offensive weapons being a long sword, often an iron mace; and a lance of eighteen feet. Archers and crossbow-men were in general use and highly paid, particularly the Genoese and Catalans; but the English bow-men still preserved their superior fame in Italy. Some of the crossbows shot off two arrows at once; those used in defence of cities often carried three *Verrettoni*, or discharged stones against the enemy. Some of the infantry's shields were so long that they stood fixed in the ground by means of an iron spike at bottom and covered the whole body while the soldier plied his weapon behind. Half pikes and javelins were much used even by heavy-armed cavalry, and as before mentioned, with bad success against the long tilting-lances and iron cavaliers of Italy.

The Hungarian horse, so much employed during this century in consequence of the connection between that kingdom and Naples, were principally archers of almost Parthian celebrity, and kept the head unarmed to insure a greater command of their weapon, especially in retreat; they were the Cossacks of that day with all the ferocity of their Hunnish ancestors.

There appears to have been little or no alteration in the besieging instruments from those of the last century except the gradual introduction of unwieldy cannon in the attack and defence of cities, whose cumbrous form and enormous weight seldom allowed of more than two or three discharges in the course of as many hours, and these always in the same direction, yet where they took effect it must always have been far superior to that of any other engine. Amongst the latter the Mangonels and "*Trabucchi*" are described as being formed of vast beams of timber suspended so as to cast a leathern sack of heavy stones from one extremity, in the manner of a sling and with exceeding force, against the enemy; from these engines it was still the custom to insult a beleaguered town by casting dead animals into it.

Such mockery was harmless, but their barbarities were not so, and yet were exercised on the most unoffending inhabitants: when from a blockaded place it became necessary to eject the useless mouths which were principally old men and females. notice was commonly given to the besieged that all male outcasts should be hung up without mercy, and the women's petticoats were usually cut away behind as far as the waist: they were then branded on one cheek, and when famine at last overcame modesty and forced others without the walls the nose was amputated in addition, as will hereafter be seen at the siege of Pisa by the Florentines.

Military service, unless compounded for, was exacted by all governments from vassals and citizens: either for simple "Cavalcades," which were mere inroads often made in pride and defiance; or else to show themselves prepared for hostilities: also for "*Eserciti*," which were more serious expeditions for particular objects not of the last importance; and for what was called *Esercito Generale*, General Armament, or Host, when the state was endangered by a powerful enemy. For the two first the *Bando* or *Ban* was summoned, con-



sisting of the stipulated contingents of horse and foot already settled by treaty, and we therefore often read of Florence and Pisa sending their "*Cavallate*" or bands of city cavalry, each man-at-arms being attended by another on a Ronzino or inferior horse. But when the general army took the field both Ban and Arriere Ban were summoned, comprising almost every man capable of bearing arms. Yet the larger cities even in such cases often sent but a quarter or a sixth of their armed citizens at a time; or perhaps two of these divisions which were regularly relieved, the turn for service being often settled by the dice; but sometimes all were compelled to arm and serve personally, in despite of every privilege.

The army was attended by a certain number of commissaries on the part of the Seignory with great power of interference, and always assisting at councils of war: they were often mischievous, but absolutely necessary for the control of an army of mercenary foreigners. Other officers were appointed whose exclusive duty was to prevent desertion and similar breaches of discipline, and every ten, twenty, and forty men were commanded by an officer, the two last under the name of "*Constables.*"

The chief engineer who had charge of all the military engines, was an officer of no small consideration in the armies of this period, which were also furnished with a sufficient train of chaplains, surgeons, heralds, trumpeters, and other musicians; amongst which bagpipers were very conspicuous; and often with a full attendance of buffoons and jugglers; besides various other means of fashionable amusement.

There does not appear to be any certainty of gunpowder having been used in Italy before the year 1360 when according to Ammirato it was brought by the Venetians from Germany, and along with the "*Bombarda*" or primitive cannon, used against the Genoese in the Lagoons*. These Bombarde resembled our

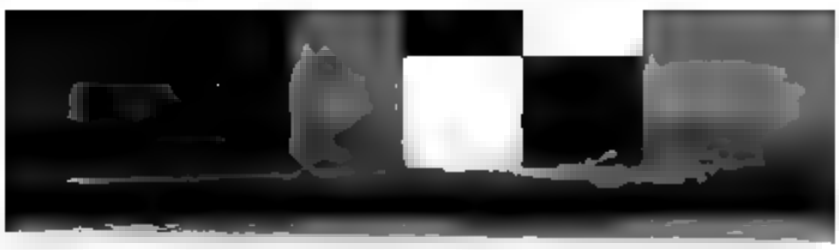
* S. Ammirato, Lib. xv., p. 804.

sea mortars but were much more rough and unwieldy and carried a stone ball: they as well as the cannon were frequently placed in batteries formed by a succession of triangular cars called "*Rebaudichini*" arranged with their angular point opposed to the enemy thus forming a series of embrasures adequate to the protection of artillerymen from missiles. Rockets seem to have been also employed, about the same period for setting fire to towns, but by the Arabs as early as the beginning of the century.

Women and monks were often engaged as spies, the former protected by their sex the latter by their habit in those days of religion and chivalry; nor was it uncommon for adventurous chiefs to assume the monk's or minstrel's garb and hazard their lives by exploring an enemy's camp: hanging, burning, or being cast from a military engine, were the usual penalties, and even guides were frequently punished by loss of limb or the exaction of heavy fines, but traitors were decapitated, and sometimes "*planted*," a shocking punishment already described as common in this century *.

The pay of great men as generals, without any considerable following, was variable according to the urgency of the occasion and the probable duration of their command: Count Beltram del Balzo, general of the league made by Florence with Perugia and Naples in 1336 against Mastino della Scala, received 400 florins a month out of which he was bound to maintain a doctor of laws, two assistants, two notaries, three trumpeters and a kettle-drummer, besides other attendants. He was moreover to bring with him a hundred armed cavalry as part of the general contingent for which he received an additional allowance of 10 florins a month for each: no horse under the value of 20 florins was allowed, but compensation was given by the confederates if killed or mutilated in their service †.

* Cebrario, Economia Politica del Medio Evo, capo ix.
† S. Ammirato, Lib. viii., p. 406.



For the more regular payment of mercenary troops a bank was established by the Florentines in 1395 under the direction of two magistrates where a military muster-roll was kept and the expenses paid by a stoppage from soldiers' wages. In Pisa we find that a company of two hundred native crossbow-men were raised in 1381 who received six florins a year when not on service but twelve times that sum when employed beyond the walls.

The prevailing, though probably heightened impression of Florentine riches, as it raised the value of their ransoms when prisoners, so it may be reasonably supposed to have raised the price of soldiers in their service, and there is some reason to believe that money bore a lower value generally in that opulent city than in many of the surrounding states. It is certain that stockjobbing prevailed in all its varieties to such an extent that in 1371 a tax of two per cent. was imposed on every time bargain. "Seeing" says Stefani "that many gambled in the funds, and said, 'Stocks are at 30 per cent.; now I wish to do some business with you: I will give you, or you may give me in one year from this time so much stock at 31 per cent.' 'What will you take to do this?' A bargain is made and they remain quiet: if stocks fall they buy, if they rise they sell and thus shift their bargain twenty times a year. Wherefore a tax of 2 per cent. was put on every bargain made" *.

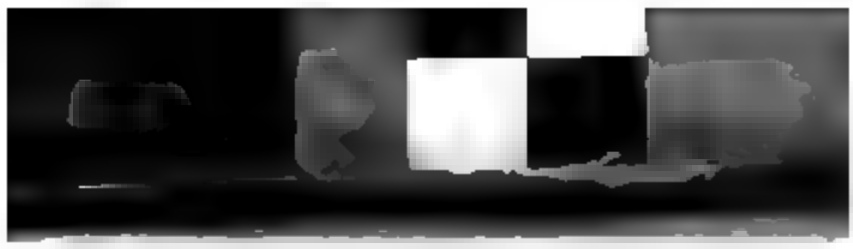
About the same period, in consequence of the firm of the Guardi failing for 127,000 florins, new and heavy punishments were inflicted not only on the bankrupt himself but also on his wife and children and he was moreover rendered incapable of election to any public office: even honest bankrupts who fled were outlawed until they returned; and no previous composition made with their creditors exonerated them from their original debt if subsequent prosperity enabled them to pay †.

*M. di C. Stefani, Lib. ix., Rub. 727.

† S. Ammirato, Lib. xiii., p. 679.—M. di Coppo Stefani, Lib. ix. Rub. 727.

Great pains appear to have been taken by the Florentines to maintain their moral reputation as tradesmen, manufacturers, and merchants: as a public body they had a high theoretical sense of probity and honourable dealing, which was not as may be supposed, always carried out in practice by individuals. Each piece of Florentine cloth for instance was by law ordered to have attached to it a label containing every item of its cost from the first purchase in England France or Belgium until its re-sale beyond the Alps. Namely, Prime cost; "*God's penny*," (levied on all contracts in England) expense of carriage to Florence, dyeing or re-dyeing, combing, shearing, pressing, folding, &c. with all the duties tolls taxes package cartage, and even the wine and expenses at taverns in transit.

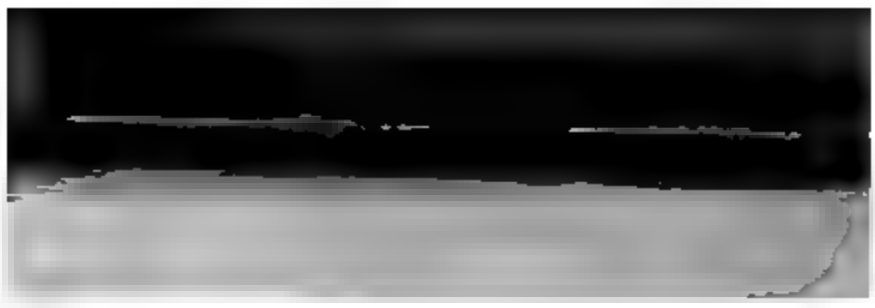
The innumerable custom-houses with heavy tolls and duties in every independent state and feudal lordship during the middle ages, were vexatious impediments to trade, and coupled with insecure travelling prevented any single private individual from exercising it. The consequence was an association of those rich and powerful companies of Tuscan, Lombard, Flemish, and Provençal merchants, who being ruled as in the present day by directors and governors, made compacts with great barons and princes; obtained security, privileges and exemptions by threatening to change the line of trade, and acted altogether as sovereign independent societies. They were too useful to quarrel with, and were generally protected by great monarchs especially the popes, who often supported them by the force of ecclesiastical censures: this was made necessary not only from the avarice of individual rulers, but from the ill-understood and illusive temptation of high duties which sometimes amounted to prohibition, and at others bore hard on poverty by an equal charge on the coarsest and finest fabrics. The common and expressive name for these illegal, sudden, and vexatious demands, which were often exacted in defiance of treaties, was "*Malatolte*" "eviltaken" or robbery, and the uni-



versal adoption of the word bears ample testimony to the practice. Nevertheless commercial profits in those days were great, because the growing taste for comforts and luxuries, which filled half Europe, could only be supplied from a comparatively restricted source and that source in the hands of a few powerful individuals; the external commerce of Naples for instance was in the fourteenth century almost exclusively monopolised by the Bardi and a few other wealthy Florentines *.

The multitude of petty jurisdictions through which the overland trade was constrained to pass, necessarily turned the greatest part of the Transalpine commerce seaward; nevertheless a brisk communication was maintained by the Simplon, Mont Cenis and Monginevra passes, under the powerful protection of the commercial world of Italy; for besides the corporate character of each trade, the whole body of civic "Arts" acted in union for all external affairs; and moreover of itself formed a member of the great community of Italian merchants; to which were occasionally if not permanently united those of Provence and Catalonia. A powerful mercantile state was thus created, springing as it were from the very pressure of misrule, and spreading civilisation through the still murky and barbarous regions of ignorance: it treated by means of its ambassadors with every potentate, and procured by particular conventions that protection which the political system and rough character of the age rendered impossible for private individuals to accomplish. The principal stipulations were, that tolls and duties should not be suddenly increased; that indemnity for offence was to be demanded from the person who committed it and punishment inflicted on him alone, not on the whole body of his compatriot merchants: that their bales should not be opened; that the roads should be protected; and that all disputes should be settled in a day. Moreover, that no goods should be seized through the bad conduct of conductors, and that every

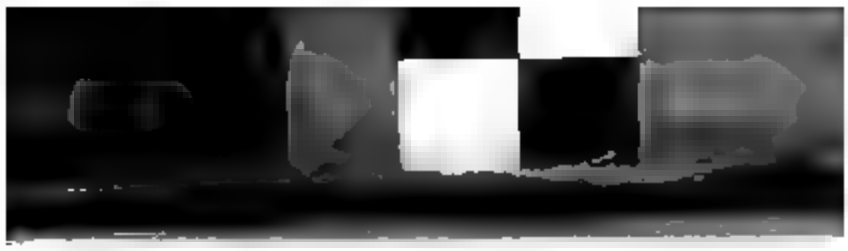
* Cibrario, Econ. Pol. Med. Evo, cap. viii.



mischief done to merchants by thieves or robbers should be immediately made good: there was besides, an occasional stipulation that all duties were to be paid in one species of money to prevent unpleasant discussion and difficulties. These conventions were called treaties of "*Salvaguardia*" "*Salvacondotto*" and "*Guidagio*;" or safe-guard, safe-conduct, and guidance; and when one of these treaties was concluded at Bourget, by Louis of Savoy seignor of Vaude, with the united Tuscan, Lombard, and Provençal merchants, before Amedeus V. there were present as their representatives, envoys from the merchants of Milan, Florence, Lucca, Siena, Bologna, Pistoia, Rome, Orvieto, Venice, Genoa, Alba, Asti, and Provence.

The geographical position of Savoy made its princes eager to facilitate the passage of trade through their dominions; but the great and natural protectors of commerce were the popes; because drawing the bulk of their revenue from foreign countries and through mercantile channels, the papal treasure became unsafe and was often exposed to plunder in despite of every precaution. To this end pontiffs brought the spiritual arms, and perhaps never more usefully, to bear on such agreements when ordinary tribunals would have been mocked and an appeal to arms unavailing.

A local paper currency seems to have existed at Milan in the thirteenth century, a probable consequence of accumulated treasure in the princely coffers for wars and other expenses; but the invention of bills of exchange and the necessity of advancing money on credit opened, as Cibrario observes, the councils of princes to their bankers; for no important enterprise could be undertaken without their knowledge and scarcely without their aid, and the Florentines who swarmed in every foreign state were by means of their banks and other mercantile establishments noted for an accurate and early acquaintance with all political secrets. Their foreign spy-system was well organised, subtle, and penetrating, because their own



merchants were their spies, rulers, ministers and ambassadors. Thus the interests of commerce and politics became in a great measure identified and gold was never wanting; so that to use the homely expression of one of their own writers, "*The Florentines were acquainted with all the creeks and crannies of the world*"*.

Their wisdom however did not shield them from debt. The second incumbrance of this kind contracted after their conflict with Mastino della Scala in 1336 was a consequence of that event and amounted in 1353; after the Pisan war on account of Lucca; to 800,000 florins. This according to Cibrario's calculation is equivalent to 16,926,000 francs or about 677,040*l.* sterling and bore an interest of one danaio per lira a month, or five per cent. per annum with the further privilege of being free from seizure or sequestration for any crime, yet was vendible and transferable. During the wars with Gregory XI. and the Count of Vertu the real property of the state according to Goro Dati was estimated at 20,000,000 of florins and the property of public creditors, or funded debt held by citizens, from 4,000,000 to 5,000,000; but after Visconte's death and the conquest of Pisa, peace and general confidence added one-fourth to the value of every kind of property. The real property of Florence was probably much more than this, because it was by far the richest city in Tuscany; and on the levy of a forced loan at Siena in 1357 of two in a thousand, 40,000 florins were raised from that city alone, which would give 20,000,000 florins; or according to Cibrario's calculation 423,850,000 francs, equal to about 16,954,000*l.* sterling†. Florence therefore thirty years later was probably much more opulent: according to Goro Dati she spent in the three successive wars with Gian-Galeazzo Visconte Count of Vertù, the

* Goro Dati, Lib. iv., p. 56.—Cibrario, capo viii.

† Goro Dati, Lib. viii., p. 131.—M. Villani, Lib. iii., cap. cvi.—Cibrario, cap. viii.

previous great war with pope Gregory XI., and the subsequent purchase and conquest of Pisa in 1406; independent of smaller quarrels and subsidies to condottieri; about 11,500,000 florins which on the basis of Cibrario's computed value of metals would be equivalent to about 9,732,450*l.* sterling of our present money *.

Having frequently quoted the distinguished Chevalier Cibrario's estimate of the comparative value of ancient and modern money it may be as well to indicate the plan on which he proceeded to arrive at conclusions so different from those of all other writers on this subject Adam Smith and Galiani (della Moneta) he says were well aware of the necessity of comparing ancient money with the price of commodities in order to ascertain its real value: Dupré de Saint Maur †, Carli ‡, and Pagnini § besides many other writers of all nations held the same opinion but did not proceed in their calculations with all the judgment necessary to accomplish this object. The proportions proposed by the two first between the ancient and modern value of things differ considerably and therefore cannot be accepted, neither does he think that those of Selden and Hallam have a more stable basis. The quantity of precious metals imported from America is a false measure even if accurately known; because we are ignorant of the relative quantity coined and manufactured into articles of luxury pomp and magnificence: neither are we acquainted with the extent of a diminished supply from the European mines in consequence, besides various other circumstances in population agriculture and trade; all in a continual state of mutability but all more or less affecting the value of money.

It being impossible to make an accurate calculation on such an unsteady basis, one less subject to variation becomes neces-

* Goro Dati, Lib. viii., p. 129.

† Essai sur la Monnaie et sur le Rapport entre l'Argent et les Denrées.

‡ Disertazione sull' Origine e sul Commercio della Moneta.

§ Del Pregio delle Cose, in his work on the Decima of Florence.

sary, and this is generally allowed to be found in corn which supplies the first, constant, and universal necessity of man, and is perpetually adjusting itself to the number and condition of the people. For example says Cibrario, "When I ascertain that with three *soldi*, that is with thirty-six danari of Vienne (in Provence) a bushel of wheat could have been purchased at Turin in 1290. When I know what quantity of metal answered to the thirty-six danari and what was the real capacity of the bushel, or *staio*, at that epoch; then by comparing the average price of wheat at the end of the thirteenth century with that of the present day, I can reasonably conclude that the thirty-six danari of Vienne correspond with that amount of modern money necessary for the purchase of a bushel of wheat, and that this is the real value of the thirty-six danari. But to arrive at this conclusion it becomes necessary to proceed as follows.

"First, To turn ancient money into modern with reference only to the *quantity of metal contained in both*. Second, To find the medium price of wheat in those days by the average of a certain number of years. Third, To find the true capacity of the ancient measures. Fourth, To compare the ancient price of wheat with the modern price, in each year of the period of my search; and then to increase the money, the value of which I seek, by the difference between the price of an equal quantity of wheat at that and the present time."

In all these points he succeeded after a long, minute, and careful examination of the voluminous public accounts of Savoy and Piedmont, where amongst other interesting facts he discovered that in 1336, from a "*Sestario*" or ancient Piedmontese bushel, of wheat; equal to two "*Emine*" of that day; three "*Rubbi*" or seventy-five pounds of bread, were usually made. At present two emine make eighty-six pounds of bread (from which he deducts one pound as an allowance for an apparently *supposed* present superiority in the preparation

of bread) and there remains ten pounds difference between the ancient and modern emina.

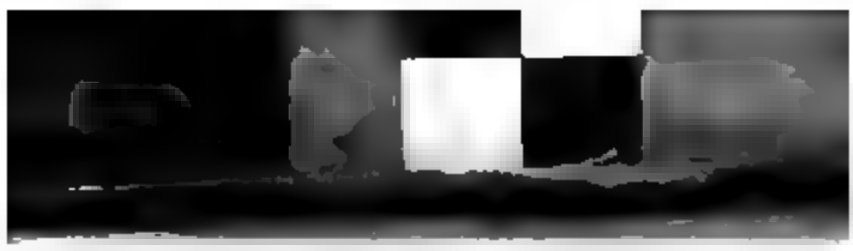
The latter he tells us is equal to something more than twenty-three *litres*; therefore the ancient Sestario or Staio of Piedmont was equivalent to 40,685 litres. The average price of one emina of wheat from 1825 to 1835, was 4 lire 64c. 63m. Therefore a sestario would now cost 8 lire 17c. 76m., or so many French francs. The medium price of a sestario of wheat from 1289 to 1300, in Piedmont was 4 lire 22c. 64m. The actual medium price as above 8 lire 17c. 76m. And thus with infinite labour he reduces ancient money to its modern value*.

Hence it appears that money in those days was something less than double its present value in Savoy and Piedmont and probably; from the generally equal distribution of bullion as a commodity; with little variation from this throughout the south of Europe.

In the Florentine chronicles too we have frequent notices of the price of corn and value of the golden florin; also the market weight of the *staio* or Florentine bushel of wheat in the fourteenth century; and these enable us to calculate pretty nearly the relative value of ancient and modern money in that capital, without reference to, but nearly agreeing with Cibrario's estimable tables†.

Padre Vincenzio Fineschi's history of thes carce and abundant years of Florence (abridged from a manuscript of the fourteenth century) offers the results of a monthly register kept from 1320 to 1335 by Domenico Lenzi, a corn-merchant of that day, and taken from the public market books of Florence. Five of these averages are struck half-yearly and thirteen annually, together with the mean value of the golden florin in Tuscan lire corresponding to each average. Amongst them

* Cibrario, cap. vii. A remarkable work, of great value labour and research.
† F. V. Fineschi, Caristie e Dovizie. – M. Villani, Lib. iii., cap. lvi.



there are no less than eight averages which include a period of four years and a half of famine prices, besides thirteen of dear and medium seasons; but the former greatly predominating in consequence of a shackled corn trade always under the strict superintendence, and generally in the hands of government.

The constant agitation of an universal and energetic commerce gave a continual and excessive fluctuation to the inferior currency while the golden florin, intrinsically unaltered, became a fixed standard of value for the rest. The average worth of this celebrated coin during the above period was 3 *lire*, 2 *soldi*, and 9 Florentine *danari*; a great alteration in silver since its first appearance in 1252 when it answered to 20 *soldi* or 1 *lira*.

The average price for a *staio* of wheat containing from 51 to 52 pounds troy of 5760 grains each, was at the same period 1 lira, 1 soldo and 7 danari. In 1836 the average price of wheat was about 4 lire, 12 soldi and 6 danari in the Florentine market; and the *Zecchino* or ancient golden florin which has scarcely altered is now equal to 13 lire 6 soldi 8 danari of Tuscan currency. The capacity of the modern *staio* differs little if anything from that of the fourteenth century: it contains 1486 cubic inches and the English bushel 2150·4; wherefore it is to the latter as 0·941 to 1. These data will give 42 pounds of 7000 grains, or 294,000 grains avoirdupois, for its capacity; which brings it nearly to the ancient measure. According to the above authority the average cost of a staio of wheat during the thirteen cheaper years appears to have been 14 soldi and 6 danari; and the medium value of a florin for the same period 64 soldi. Hence by a simple proportion the value of 14 soldi and 6 danari in modern Tuscan money is found to be 65 soldi or 3 lire and 5 soldi. The mean of the eight famine averages by a similar process makes the cost of a staio 34 soldi; the value of a florin 60 soldi and 7 danari; and the value of a staio (or 34 soldi) in modern money is 7 lire, 9 soldi, and 8 danari. A florin of gold according to this statement would then purchase, on an

average of the thirteen more favourable seasons, about 229½ pounds of corn; and at present by similar reasoning only 150 pounds of the same commodity. Wherefore it would appear that the value of money at Florence in the fourteenth century is to its present value as 229·5 to 150. And this is no great way from the result of Cibrario's estimate for Savoy and Piedmont; as on a rough examination of his tables it would seem that there the relative value of a florin at the same epochs was as 258 to 131, and corn probably cheaper than at the richer and less agricultural Florence. But the conclusion Cibrario comes to is probably not far from the truth, namely, that all things considered, from the maintenance of a prisoner to the state of a prince, the average cost of subsistence in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was not much under that of the present day in the south of Europe, the augmentation of public wealth being counterbalanced by an increased population who proportionably divide it; and even the pay of soldiers, which seems to be the highest remuneration of the time, besides its unequal and ever-varying character, sinks nearly to the common level when the charge of their horses and arms is considered.

In the first rank of pay stood the knight with two horses and a squire, and sometimes more; as we find one in 1305 receiving upwards of 63 francs a day of modern money for himself and five squires; but from 6 to 7 francs was the usual pay for a chevalier with a single horse and Ronzino. The squire was frequently engaged alone and received pay according to the number and quality of his horses and attendants. Next came the man-at-arms with his "*destriero*" or war-horse, and his pay ranged from 4½ to upwards of 6½ francs a day. Then the man-at-arms with a courser or inferior horse received from something under 3 to near 5 francs a day: but they had often two or three horses besides Ronzini or hacks, on which they rode to battle as our huntsmen do to cover. They were

also called "*Militi*," "*Briganti*," "*Barbute*," and afterwards "*Lances*," and often received from 5 to nearly 7 francs of daily pay. The mounted crossbow-men stood high, and received from under 4½ to upwards of 10 francs a day. Infantry of the same arm received from something more than 2 to upwards of 4 francs. Archers received from about 102 to 145 francs a month in 1366 and 1401. The "*Client*," or common foot-soldier with shield and lance, from 58 centimes or something more than ½ a franc to nearly 1¾. The monthly pay of a Marseilles galley, (probably small,) was 6112 francs, while that of the captain of Genoese galleys, for one of these vessels, came to more than four times that sum in 1366. By an alliance made in 1340 between Pisa and Genoa a squadron of galleys was to be jointly maintained against pirates and others: each galley was to have a captain and his servant; a secretary and under secretary; a boatswain and mate; from fifteen to twenty good and sufficient crossbow-men; a hundred and eighty rowers, and not less: at least a hundred and fifty cuirasses; a hundred and fifty shields; a hundred and fifty skull-caps; five thousand arrows, ("*Verrettoni*"); twenty-four bill-hooks; thirty-six long lances; eight lanterns; sixty "*Cantaros*" of bread (about four tons) which was always to be kept up: and if two Genoese and one Pisan galley were cruising together the Genoese commanded, and the contrary *.

A military surgeon with his servant received 5½ francs a day. A carpenter of engineers upwards of 2¼ francs. A stone-cutter to provide stones for military engines, 1¾. Cars and bullocks to carry military engines cost for the daily hire of each beast 66 centimes in 1321, and for the driver 1 franc and 31 centimes. The pay of a carpenter or mason finding himself was 3 francs and 64 centimes; if fed, 2 francs and 43 centimes; the cost of maintenance was therefore 1 franc 21

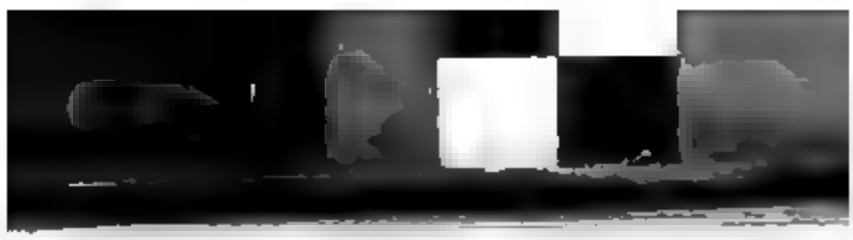
* Vide *Dal Borgo*, "*Diplomi Pisani*," pp. 76—79); also Roncioni, with some slight variation.

centimes for a Piedmontese workman in 1384, which according to Cibrario is its present value. The monthly pay of a knight banneret (*cavaliere banderese*) seems to have been about 407 francs and that of a knight bachelor 305. A *donzello* or page received 203; and nobles serving on foot 6 francs and 80 centimes a day. Amongst other expenses the pay of a dragoman at Constantinople in 1366 appears to have been 204 francs or about 8 pounds sterling a month, while in the same year Amedeus VI. of Savoy gave no less than 7374 francs or 295 pounds sterling for a Romance, to the Sire Guillaume de Machaut; two years after 366 francs for another to the Sire de Couci's minstrel, and in 1328 an advocate's law library of 16 vols. sold for 162 pounds sterling.

The coursers and ronzini were used in battle by light-armed horsemen; and horses of all kinds, although perhaps proportionately more numerous than at present from their universal adoption both in civil and military life, bore as high and even higher prices than they now do in the south of Europe. Men women and children principally journeyed on horseback and generally with many attendants; for litters were not in common use although both these and cars were often preferred by female travellers *. Petrarca complains of being obliged, in order to avoid the murmurs of people, to take more horses than he wanted: "Cato the Censor," he says, "was contented with one horse and three valets but our depraved vain luxurious manners cannot accommodate themselves to this Roman simplicity. We cannot in these days go a mile without a circle of horses and servants: I resist as much as I can this torrent of perversion; when at home two horses serve me, but in travelling I am better known than I would wish, and in spite of myself am compelled to bend to the customs of a corrupt age"†.

The lowest priced horse for a servant seems to have cost

* Cibrario, Tavole, &c., p. 550—559. † De Sade, Vol. iii., p. 741.



between 10 and 11 pounds; mules from 12 to 80; and a complete war-horse given in 1365 by Amedeo VI. of Savoy to Galeazzo Visconte cost 800 pounds sterling of our present money *.

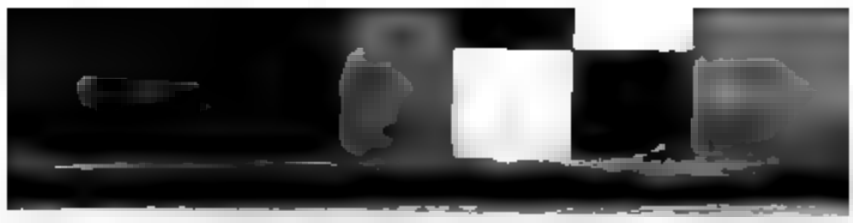
The roadside inns were probably few, but those in towns were good and even magnificent if a correct inference may be drawn from their having spoons, forks, goblets, and often plates of solid silver. A passion for such display, beyond all common necessity, seems to have pervaded every rank of sufficient opulence to satisfy it; probably arising from the union of vanity and convenience in a period of great insecurity when sudden calls for money could be most quickly met by the pledging of such valuables †. The comforts of the road must of course have varied in different countries, but the expense of travelling could not have been great as we learn from Buonaccorso Pitti; whose master considered 12 florins a sufficient allowance to take him from Buda to Florence. Being young and wishing to seek his fortune he had attached himself to a travelling merchant who buying 1000 florins' worth of saffron at Venice passed by Croatia to Buda where the saffron was sold at double its original cost. These Florentine travellers seemed to have looked to the main object and lived roughly: for Pitti falling sick of a fever was left with the said ducats to the care of their landlord: his bed he says was a sack of straw in an old room; no doctor visited him; no female inhabited the house, there was but one man-servant who cooked and waited on Michele Marucci his landlord and two merchants who lodged there. In this condition almost dead with fever he remained six weeks until St. Martin's eve, when a bevy of young Germans assembled with fifers to dance in a spacious room opposite Buonaccorso's chamber where he lay with a sort of old bathing-cloth wrapped round him instead of sheets, and covered by a carpet and his own greasy furred cloak. Some of the young men happened to peep into his chamber and

* Cibrario, p. 563. † Cibrario, p. 543.

seeing him in this condition immediately forced on his cloak and hurried him off to the ball-room, saying "We will either kill or cure you, but at all events put you out of pain;" and for a whole hour in spite of his earnest prayers they forced him to dance until he fell down with pure exhaustion; then carrying him back to bed they tossed all their cloaks on top of him and resumed their dancing and drinking, which lasted all the night. Next morning they returned for their cloaks, compelled Buonaccorso, who had in the interim fallen into a profuse and long continued perspiration, to dress and drink with them which he willingly did, and after another hour of repose went abroad convalescent, supped at a friend's house who was master of the mint at Buda; gambled, and won 200 florins; then bought horses on a speculation and returned to Florence. Such were the first steps of a young Florentine merchant of high family, the subsequent companion of kings and princes, and the father of Lucca Pitti who set up as a rival to Cosimo de' Medici and built the celebrated royal palace that still bears his name *.

Another anecdote of this author will illustrate the practical working of Florentine institutions perhaps better than any general description: he transmits it as an example, and a warning to his children not to cope with or even defend themselves against more powerful citizens however just might be their cause. Luigi Pitti the brother of Buonaccorso when Podestà of Bucine in the Val-d'-Ambra had several opportunities of hearing the complaints and redressing the wrongs of the venerable abbot of Santo Piero a Ruoti an ancient abbey of Val-d'-Ambra founded by the Ubaldini counts of Chitignano. These services made an impression on the old prelate who had been worried by more powerful neighbours, and attached him so much to Luigi and the Pitti family that about three years after on finding himself becoming too weak to continue his functions and therefore more subject to annoyance, he repaired

* Cronica di Buonaccorso Pitti, p. 17.



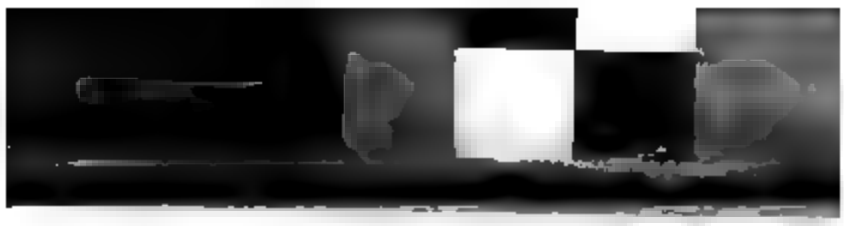
to Florence and informed them of his determination to resign the abbacy, which he had then held for four-and-thirty years; and at the same time constituted them his legal agents, with powers to offer his resignation whenever they could succeed in securing the reversion to their own family. The Pitti were at first unwilling to take advantage of this friendly act; but after trying to dissuade him by a promise of their zealous support against all enemies, they accepted the procuration resolving however not to make use of it, but still support their ancient friend with the whole force of their kindred.

The weak in Florence, especially if worth plundering, were never entirely free from the fangs of more powerful neighbours in despite of the protective law of petition; wherefore Albertaccio Ricasole and his potent clan whose possessions lay in the vicinity, presuming on the abbot's impotence determined to ruin him by a false accusation and secure the benefice for one of their own relations. Appearing before the "*Ten of the Balià*" at Florence they boldly charged the abbot with covertly attempting to deliver his abbey up to the Ubertini its ancient owners then rebels under the ban of the republic; and to render the charge more plausible they had secretly despatched a messenger in the colours of that family to declare at the convent during the prelate's absence that he was come on the part of Andrieno degli Ubertini to confer with the abbot and carry back his answer. This information and a summons from the Balià brought the latter quickly to Florence and Luigi Pitti accompanied him to that magistracy by whom he was closely examined acquitted and dismissed.

This incident at once convinced Buonaccorso that unless the abbacy were speedily renounced and its reversion secured, the Ricasoli either by force or fraud would soon become its masters: he however was not supported in this opinion by other kinsmen, who feared to incur blame, more especially as the abbot to whom these doubts were communicated, had by the comfort

and assurance of their support in a great measure recovered his health and efficiency. He nevertheless resigned himself to their decision in everything saving a compromise of his honour; this last injunction confirmed Francesco and Luigi Pitti, while Buonaccorso and his third brother Bartolommeo still held to their former opinion as most secure and eligible for the prelate himself.

The Ricasoli on seeing their intended victim so actively supported, relinquished the scheme of striking him down through the Florentine government; changed their point of attack, and by means of Pandolfo, Bindaccio, Galeotto, and Carlo Ricasole: all of them squires of the pope's household at Rome; preferred a second false accusation accompanied by a petition for the benefice. The result was a summons to the abbot; but decrepitude and a fear of personal outrage induced him to send an advocate in the person of Ser Giuliano dalla Cicogna a priest of Saint Lorenzo and a friend of Buonaccorso Pitti. Meanwhile the latter and his brothers being still on friendly terms with the Ricasoli called separately on Albertaccio and several members of that family in Florence, explained the transaction that had taken place between them and the abbot, and requested the Ricasoli to drop the proceeding, which they at once promised if possible to do by an immediate communication with their kinsmen at Rome. The Pitti then petitioned the Seignory to use their influence with the pontiff for having the abbot's cause argued before the bishops of Florence, Arezzo, or Fiesole and then decide according to their report. This would perhaps have been granted if Betto Busini a prior and friend of Ricasole had not according to instructions moved that the other party should be heard. Both sides were accordingly ordered to attend on the following day, when all the members of colleges were personally canvassed by the Ricasoli party to vote against the petition: Buonaccorso firmly demanded that his prayer should be granted; but Bindaccio Peruzzi a relation of the Ricasoli, not only vilified the abbot's character but



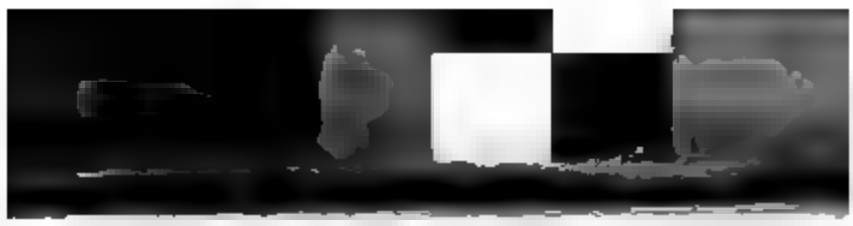
unblushingly declared that the benefice was wanted for his own brother Arnoldo, and demanded a negative, which after some discussion was finally given through the powerful influence of that family.

Cardinal Orsini who in the interim had been appointed to hear the cause at Rome would accept no substitute, but insisted on the abbot's personal attendance; on this Buonaccorso, who had formerly known him, despatched a letter inclosed to the cardinal in a silver gilt cup of 32 florins value; and Giuliano in presenting it said: "Messere I recommend the abbot of Ruoti to your protection for love of your servant Buonaccorso and the Holy Father." On this Pandolfo Ricasole (alluding to a treaty concluded by the advice of Luigi Pitti against the pontiff's wishes) immediately exclaimed "Messere he recalls to your memory a cordial enemy of the holy church and our lord the Pope." And with this convenient handle the pontiff was so dexterously managed by his Florentine squires that the abbot was condemned to lose his benefice and be placed in perpetual confinement, and Arnoldo Peruzzi preferred to the vacant abbacy in commendam until confirmed by the Florentine government, which had succeeded to the rights of its ancient patrons the Ubertini.

The abbot remained a prisoner at large attended by a public officer, but as a guest of the Pitti who foreseeing that the pope's decree and excommunication not only of the old prelate but of all who supported him, coupled with the aid of the powerful Ricasoli, Gianfiglazzi, Peruzzi Castellani, with other friends and adherents, and followed by a host of false witnesses would finally carry everything, began at last to despair. Buonaccorso imparted his fears to Giuliano dalla Cicogna who suggested as their only chance that the abbot should lose no time in accusing Albertaccio Ricasole of an outrage, by petition to the Seignory, and the terror of condemnation to the class of nobles would force him to a compromise: approving thir

counsel but too wary to implicate himself, Buonaccorso left the details to the priest who willingly undertook to arrange everything, provided that a confidential servant of the Pitti were placed at his orders. A pretended assault was accordingly made on the abbot as he passed by night to a friend's house escorted by a public officer, whose presence alone apparently saved him from personal injury; the Seignory indignant at this outrage to a prisoner under their charge, instantly proclaimed a heavy punishment both in purse and person for any person convicted of concealing the culprit's names after three days were expired; and confirmed the decree next morning by the unanimous vote of the colleges. Buonaccorso knew exactly how the transaction had passed from the assailants, who arrived at his house a little before the other party from whom he received a false and exaggerated account; for the abbot, ignorant of the scheme, magnified his own danger, and the officer had repaired with intelligence of what occurred to the Seignory. Several of the Ricasoli were arrested and examined by the podestà, but released on proving their innocence: Giuliano had also been attached and bound over to appear when summoned; but Buonaccorsi alarmed at the proclamation sent him and the other culprits out of Florence. This produced a citation for Buonaccorso himself who was threatened with a process unless Giuliano appeared: these things continued for three days, Buonaccorso still persevering in his silence although again examined and threatened. On the fourth however, fearful of consequences if the secret were divulged by others, he went and revealed everything to the Seignory, who instantly issued a formal command for the arrest of all who were named, as well as any others suspected of being privy to the transaction; and ordered the Podestà to condemn them in purse and person; and from this sweeping sentence before trial, Buonaccorso alone if inculpated was to be absolved and liberated.

No less than five criminal prosecutions were thus commenced



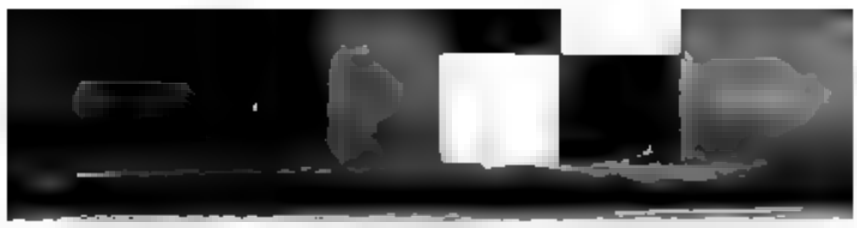
including Buonaccorso's; amongst them his own servant; his friend Giuliano; Giuliano's brother; Lapo Ricasole a relation but deadly enemy of Albertaccio's; besides another individual. The fear of torture prevented any of them appearing except Buonaccorso, who after examination was dismissed on finding bail for 3000 florins, but the rest were condemned in heavy fines and exiled for three years. During this process the opposing faction exerted themselves both openly and secretly to have Buonaccorso included in the punishment, and thus destroy his civic rights, but this roused his friends to the rescue and he was saved! He leaves this history to his children; not to be used by them as a register of unexacted vengeance, but as a warning and remembrance of those who advanced to his support in time of trouble.

Nor was he long clear of this difficulty ere another equally illustrative, brought the family into fresh vexation and danger. One evening he was unexpectedly summoned before the Executor of Justice who to his surprise ordered him into solitary confinement until morning, when he learned that both himself and brother were to continue prisoners until Luigi Pitti, who many days before had quitted Florence for Naples, should return and answer to a charge of having revealed certain state secrets to the ambassadors of King Ladislaus during the period of his office as prior. This fact was assumed as proved by a letter of the ambassadors to Ladislaus which had fallen into the hands of government and Buonaccorso was ordered to announce his own peril to Luigi unless the latter appeared in person. The detention of these brothers again alarmed their friends and family who immediately assembled to the number of two hundred citizens in the church of San Piero Scheraggio, where Neri Pitti their nephew opened the discussion by praying for advice and assistance. After some consultation it was resolved that they should repair in a body before the public authorities and demand the prisoners' release: this was instead

carried into act, and warm words passed between the executor and Rinaldo Gianfiglazzi the spokesman. Nor were the women idle: within a short time all who then happened to be in Florence assembled together with their children and proceeding in a body to the public palace made a similar demand from the Balià, Seignory, and Colleges! So decided a step backed up as it was by the male relations, alarmed the government and delivered their kinsmen.

Meanwhile Luigi Pitti, then governor of Aquila for Ladislaus, after receiving the king's permission set out for Florence, but on reaching Perugia heard that he had been proclaimed an exile by sound of trumpet, three days only having been given him to appear in the capital; a notice hardly sufficient even to reach him ere the time was expired; and he was condemned as contumacious by the activity of an antagonist faction notwithstanding all the exertions of his family!

Such were party spirit and public justice in republican Florence where under the name and banners of freedom they only dreamed of liberty; and enjoying the empty pageant of choosing their masters submitted to the worst of tyrannies; the tyranny of faction. We first see the criminal judge receiving a peremptory command, *before trial*, to acquit and condemn according to the pleasure of government for an offence against itself! He is then covertly and openly assailed, after sentence given, to make him include an absolved person in a general punishment of convicted offenders: and this by a faction of avowed enemies in defiance of a public pardon; and is only prevented from yielding by a sudden and formidable array of the accused's adherents, a faction as illegal and pernicious as the first. Next we see two harmless citizens suddenly torn from their homes and imprisoned for the presumed crime of an absent kinsman, and similarly released at the rising and menaces of their indignant relatives; while the accused himself *without trial*, or sufficient time to appear on his defence or even receive his



summons, is by the influence of an antagonist faction both fined and exiled from his country*.

Such examples coupled with what has already transpired in the body of this history, are proof sufficient of the predominant spirit of what was called Florentine liberty, the melancholy mockery of a name! Those who love freedom with true affection will respect it in others, as liberty is but another name for justice; those who confound or identify it with license will trumpet forth the empty title while they still trample upon its substance.

The great discretionary power of Florentine "*Rectors*" who as already noticed were always foreigners, may be further illustrated and is made more evident by the condemnation of Paulo di Lapo of Castiglionchio in 1391. This gentleman communicated some state secrets to his brother Michele then agent to Jacornello Paduano at Milan to whom the latter disclosed them, and his imprudence was the cause of their becoming known to Gian-Galeazzo Visconte the great enemy of Florence. So vexatious a circumstance naturally roused the anger of government and Paulo was arrested, examined, and condemned to death by the Captain of the People on his own confession, but through powerful family influence the Seignory was enlisted in his favour: these high functionaries *interceded* with the Captain of the People for the commutation of his sentence to perpetual imprisonment and a fine of 3500 florins, besides having the effigies of both brothers painted on the palace as traitors, and Michele if taken and condemned, after first being "*Attanagliato*" or having his flesh torn off with heated pincers, was to be hung Ammirato relates this fact on the authority of a nameless Florentine author who blames the severity of the rector, but to the historian's surprise he casts no censure on the Seignory for exerting themselves to mitigate so cruel a sentence †.

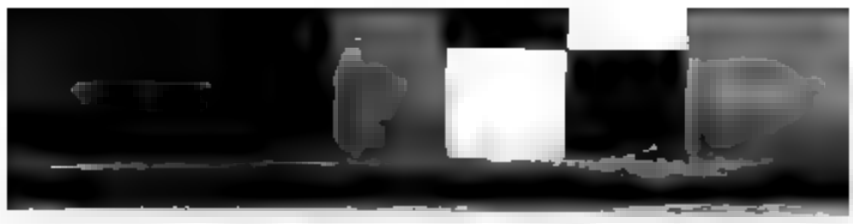
* Cronica di Buonaccorso Pitti, p. 87. † S. Ammirato, Storia, Lib. xv., p. 827.

By their motives these magistrates must be judged: the foreign rector may only have executed the Florentine law as he found it; but the immense discretionary power is undeniable. The existing Seignory were in fact either leaders, or always under the influence of the predominant faction; but when uninfluenced by politics often displayed a mild and generous spirit worthy of a gentler age, as may be instanced in the case of Louis of Capua who commanded one of the Florentine armies against Gian-Galeazzo Visconte: he had contracted debts to such an amount as to preclude his departure after the cessation of office, without legal security for his creditors, and his son Francesco remained a hostage in the Stinche prisons for his father's extravagance: this was no light suffering in those rough days when jails were as revolting as they are now the reverse; external misery not being so sharp and general as with us where love of liberty is often stifled amidst the stronger cravings of nature. Compassion for the son coupled with a grateful estimate of the father's services induced the Seignory to guarantee the debt and release the prisoner, who having been wounded in prison was cured in the convent of Santa Croce at the public cost with much shame to the father for his unnatural conduct*.

Nor was the Florentine government careless of public morals so far as these depend on legal enactments, as may be gathered from its frequent regulations, often mistaken in the means but laudable in the object; amongst them gambling became a marked and salient point of legal notice for continual assassinations were its result and therefore dice were prohibited with a justifiable severity, though probably with small effect against that insatiate craving of the soul after the distant uncertain and unknown which whether for good or evil so strongly marks its nature †. In 1396 a law was promulgated that authorised the loser of money by dice at any time within

* S. Ammirato, Storia, Lib. xvi., p. 943.

† M. di C. Stefani, Lib. xi., Rub. 864.



three years to demand its restitution, which if he failed to do within two months the obligation fell on his father, mother, brothers, and other relations in succession who could continue their cause even though the loser had been originally non-suited for want of sufficient proof of having paid the debt; nor were any renunciations or acquittance of the latter available against their demand unless with the parent or nearest relative's consent *.

A strong national feeling of pride at the foreign distinctions of countrymen often breaks forth to gild the darker features of Florentine character, the more singular because opposed to that jealousy of each others' fame and fortune which prevailed so much amongst the citizens at home; and foreign honours were not necessarily an obstacle to domestic ambition but on the contrary reflected credit on the individual and nation. The following anecdote in illustration will also show how doubtful the efficacy, whether exemplary or positive, of capital punishment inflicted in the spring of life and human passions, passions that may still prove the source and seed of brilliant virtues when reason assume its royalties; virtues that may perhaps be even created by the very crime which subjects them to an ignominious death. One Cecco di Vanni had been sentenced to death in 1373 for robbing and murdering a Florentine citizen in the district of Scarperia; but he escaped, entered the Neapolitan service, distinguished himself by his valour and ability, rose to high honours and esteem; was made a count, a marquis, and finally viceroy of the Albruzzi: he had uniformly endeavoured to do honour to his native land, and distinguished her citizens with peculiar courtesy: this conduct was altogether considered so worthy of public notice than in 1400 his sentence was formally revoked by a public decree which restored him to all the rights and honours of citizenship †.

The nature of this man's conduct may perhaps be questioned

* S. Ammirato, Storia, Lib. xvi., p. 855. † Ibid., Lib. xvi., p. 877.

by modern judgment; but it was in the spirit of the age and stamped by its approval, and therefore so far virtuous, honourable, and emulative; and he moreover did good service to his adopted country; yet all this, had he not fled, would have been buried in the grave of the executed culprit.

The care of public morals in other matters is somewhat laughable though melancholy from its oppression of those unfortunate females who are first deceived, then abused, insulted, and trampled on, by the very sinners whose treachery has ruined and abandoned them to want, to shame, and ultimate despair. Complaints having been preferred by laymen and ecclesiastics against the too close neighbourhood of these unfortunate women to the convents, a new edict was issued that forbid them to lodge within two thousand feet of any religious establishment under penalties that were doubled on all who continued to occupy a dwelling within the prescribed limits. This was followed in 1319 by banishment from Florence where none were allowed to enter, except on Mondays to make their necessary purchases after a specified hour under the pains of whipping and branding: this severity was intended to encourage matrimony while it only stimulated pandering; nay, if we may judge from Dante and later sources, encouraged still more criminal and disgusting excesses *. It was of course impossible to keep the city long immaculate, because the source of evil was within; but these women were subsequently forbidden to wear slippers: were commanded to carry their gloves in their hand and a small bell on their head, so that when they moved its sound might be heard and mark them as sinners meet only for the finger of scorn, mockery, avoidance, (perhaps attraction) and by such means they were to be induced to live more retired if not more honestly †.

These hostilities were not confined to the frailer portion of the fair sex; for female vanity and masculine gravity were ever

* S. Ammirato, Stor. Fior., Lib. v., p. 278. † Ibid., Lib. x., p. 492.

at war in Florence; prudence and extravagance were in constant collision; subtilty evading power, and womanish quickness baffling all the keen severity of legislation. Sumptuary laws were continually promulgated, and periods of distress and general misfortune were judiciously chosen for these economical reforms, but all in vain; the ladies still conquered: they dressed, they painted, they stuffed, they modified their figure and proportions with such variety, grace, and natural dexterity that a dark-complexioned or ill-formed woman was scarcely to be seen in Florence; cotemporary artists acknowledged their skill, and willingly yielded to those more delicate manipulations which corrected and improved that nature, of which they themselves were only the copiers. "From very devils in appearance" says Sacchetti quite forgetful of his gallantry, "they metamorphosed themselves into angels of beauty;" and with no less legal acumen they silenced both the judge and notary of that very court which was especially appointed to control their extravagance in personal adornment *.

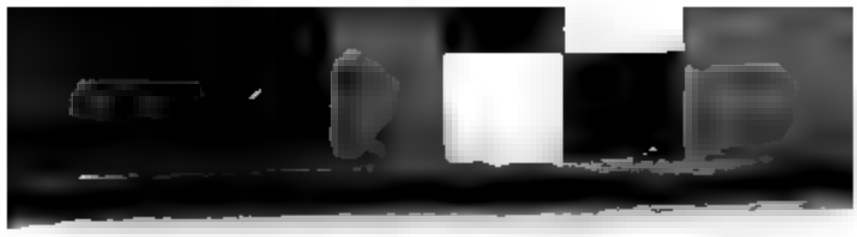
A breach of promise of marriage, as appears in Velluti's chronicle, was compensated by a fine equal to the dower but whether this amount were a legal penalty or private composition does not exactly appear: money, the sword, or the dagger, seem however to have been in frequent use for the settlement of Florentine quarrels; yet often by a slow process, for personal injuries engendered lasting feuds or long nourished and secret vengeance, and the chancery suits were equally if not more tedious than our own. Velluti gives us an instance of both. A certain Messer Lambertuccio of this family had lent a large sum of money to Berto de' Frescobaldi; and afterwards his heirs under the direction of Simone di Taddeo claimed debts as due to a very considerable amount from that family one of whose members called Amerigo Frescobaldi, was Edward the Third's principal agent and stood high in his favour. This claim involved them

* Fran. Sacchetti, Novelle 136 and 137.

in a suit that lasted thirty years, by the expense of which they were nearly ruined, for it was prolonged through the riches and consequent influence of the Frescobaldi who corrupted rectors, judges, and every other functionary connected with its decision by a lavish bribery that the Velluti were unable to resist. The bad blood thus generated broke out into personal outrage and Simone was twice wounded in consequence: his kinsman Tommaso di Lippaccio had wounded Filippo de' Frescobaldi with a javelin; the latter who was on horseback fled to Florence and without dismounting passed by the Piazza de' Frescobaldi along the Arno where meeting with Simone de' Velluti he struck him on the head with his sword, but as the latter was armed with a steel helmet did no mischief: Simone began to fly, yet not so quickly as to avoid the lance of Filippo's servant which wounded him almost mortally in the loins; a feud thus began but its duration does not appear; a new process however seems to have been commenced in consequence, which lasted until some subsequent podestà forced the parties to a pecuniary compromise *.

The dishonesty of these foreign rectors was sometimes great and if supported by a strong party escaped unpunished: we have an instance in the case of Obizo degli Alidugi who being captain of the people and favouring the Party Guelph in the memorable events of 1382, availed himself of his official power to force a young, beautiful, and noble lady of the Figliolipetri family from her home, to dishonour her, and afterwards place her in charge of a woman infamous for her disreputable establishment. The father was an exile; the family poor though noble; the brother away from Florence, and this captain was supported by the all-powerful and unscrupulous Guelphs. When the brother returned his sister suddenly disappeared and was supposed to have fallen by his hand, but the captain continued the usual time in power: at the expiration of his office there was a

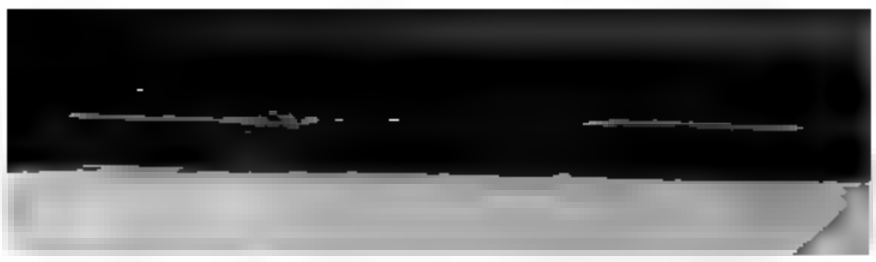
* Cronaca di Donato Velluti, p. 37.



proposal to punish him for this and other crimes, but the Guelphs prevailed and he departed with impunity *. Such lenity was not shown in those cases where nobles were delinquents or where the state authority was likely to be compromised by forbearance: in 1387, Pagnozzo Strozzi had the misfortune to kill Piero Lenzi, gonfalonier of a company in a chance fray and this was taken up by the government as an offence against the magistracy; wherefore Pagnozzo, and his brother who was perfectly innocent, were instantly declared rebels, their descendants placed amongst the Grandi, their houses both in town and country destroyed; their possessions confiscated and their relations compelled to repurchase them from the public within three months: whoever killed them was to be rewarded with a certain sum of money paid by the family of the deceased, and the homicide was allowed to carry arms in the city: the Strozzi were also compelled under heavy penalties to keep at peace with and forgive their kinsmen's murderers. The relations of Piero Lenzi on the contrary were authorized to take vengeance without fear of punishment on any of the Strozzi or their partisans who were engaged in the affray, or to depute any other person to do so: and to facilitate this they were privileged to carry arms both in Florence and the contado †.

These severe bodily pains were accompanied on the part of government by a peculiar anxiety for the soul, as we may learn from a decree which was published in 1357, forbidding any medical man to attend a patient, above the age of fifteen, more than twice unless confession had been previously made: physicians were compelled to swear before the Executor of Justice that they would observe this law and it subsequently became an essential part of the qualification necessary for a doctor's degree. Its original object was to save the souls of sick

* Mar. di Cop. Stefani, Lib. xii., Rub. 938.
† S. Ammirato, Lib. xv., p. 786.



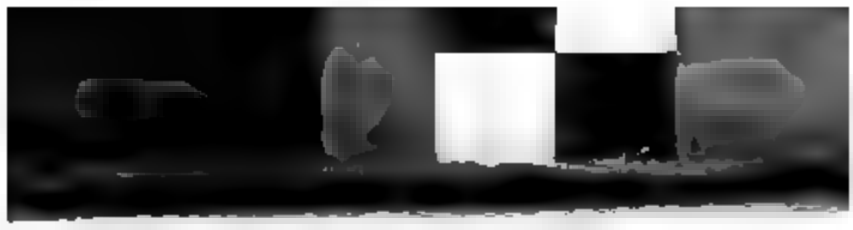
people in time of plague or other epidemic disorder, and took its origin from a decree of the Lateran Council under Innocent III*.

Amongst other regulations showing the state of manners at Florence we find that in 1398, a decree was passed by the gonfalonier Simon Bordoni to discontinue a custom hitherto existing, of compelling any pilgrims who happened to be in the town to act as public executioners, whereby the feelings of many honourable persons of high rank thus disguised were sorely outraged, wherefore this duty was transferred to those prisoners already condemned in goods and person to long or perpetual imprisonment†.

A characteristic, and if discreetly handled a wise regulation of the Florentines notwithstanding Dante's sarcasms, was the periodical revision of their statutes and ordinances, a weeding out as it were of the obsolete and contradictory, and a substitution of those which were better adapted to existing circumstances and the forward movement of man. There are certain fundamental laws necessarily permanent and admitted by all communities, as there are certain moral and theological truths acknowledged by all religions; but these broad frames or outlines are commonly filled up with a thick network of subordinate regulations that cover them like cobwebs and often impede the march of improvement. The Florentines were early aware of this, and therefore revised their laws and institutions more or less frequently and sometimes factiously, according to the turbulent or tranquil condition of the times, but in 1394, after forty years' omission, an officer was nominated for that purpose but whether permanently or not is doubtful ‡.

At or about the time of the previous scrutiny all the public weights and measures which had before been dissimilar were equalised throughout the state, and an attempt was simultaneously made to register real property, but at this epoch more

* S. Ammirato, Storia, Lib. xi., p. 583. † Ibid., Lib. xvi., p. 868.
‡ Ibid., Lib. xvi., p. 846.



to facilitate the recovery of debts than for taxation. After long trials and great expense it was abandoned in consequence of the confusion arising from an ever-varying definition of boundaries and a continual change of proprietors. The first proposition of this nature came from Count Guido in 1266, and was the immediate cause of his fall; but the first authentic notice of the execution of these decrees is in 1288*. Again in 1326 an income and property tax was inflicted on the Florentines by the Duke of Calabria with a secret board of commissioners who soon abused their power by surcharges and corrupt practices; another was tried under the expressive name of "*Sega*" or the Saw in 1351, and then that of which we now speak: but all were ephemeral until the final settlement of the "*Catasto*" by Giovanni de' Medici in 1427 which will be mentioned in its place†. About the same period in 1355 some security was imparted to one branch of justice hitherto enveloped in darkness as it affected the general population: this was a law to publish all acts of the merchants' guild (a tribunal of very extensive influence) in the vulgar tongue instead of Latin, as had been previously the custom, to the great inconvenience of unlearned suitors; this was extended the following year to the statutes of the community which in a ponderous volume were chained to a table in the gabelle office for public inspection ‡.

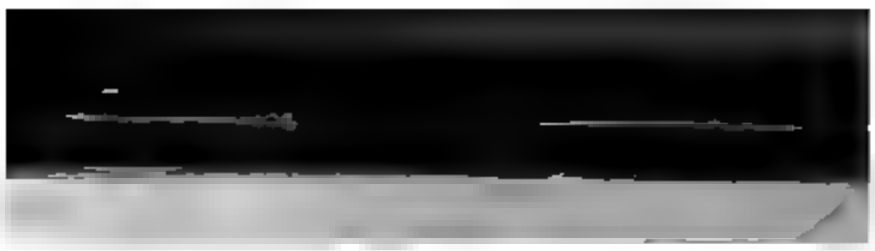
In 1392 further improvements were made by the commencement of a regular system of registry for public documents in a series of volumes which probably began the present Archive of the Reformations, that vast magazine of Florentine history a sealed book to *all but German students* and guarded with the dragon-like jealousy of the golden fleece, apprehensive perhaps of a similar harvest§.

* Gio. Villani, Lib. vii., cap. xiv.—Pagnini, Della Decima, tom. iº, cap. iv., v.

† G. Villani, Lib. x., cap. xvii.—Mat. Villani, Lib. ii., cap. xlvi.

‡ S. Ammirato, Storia, Lib. xi., p. 576-580.

§ Ibid., Lib. xvi., p. 837.

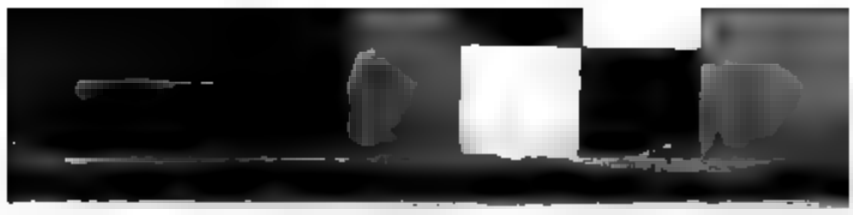


Abuses too had become rife in the clerical department with which the Florentines were generally cautious in meddling, and unless roused by some great outrage avoided all collision with the pope: in this spirit they contented themselves about the year 1355 by evading Innocent the Sixth's imperious demand that every statute which militated against ecclesiastical liberty should be instantly annulled*! This gentleness did not however lead them so far astray as to allow large sums to leave the country in the shape of clerical revenues to foreign absentee incumbents while parishioners were neglected and churches falling to ruin: the evil was summarily treated: parish priests were appointed with decent stipends to officiate, and all the surplus revenue employed under the direction of commissioners for repairs and charity†. In those days too, "*post obit*" bonds were as well understood as now and young heirs of wealthy citizens quite as dangerously situated, for minors were lavishly supplied with ready money at exorbitant interest until all such debts were declared unlawful and forbidden to be discussed or received in any court of justice.

Nor was the legal profession exempt from censure; the notaries became during this century so unmeasured and grasping in their charges that a general outcry compelled the government to interfere and by severe penalties endeavour to check the evil, but without effect although these scandalous transactions occurred in the public offices of state‡. For this branch of the profession which included that of the conveyancer, Florence was as celebrated as Bologna for jurisconsults, yet the greatest of these which Italy produced in the fourteenth century was a Florentine.

Dino Rossoni di Mugello, who as he died in 1303 more properly belongs to the last century, taught and studied at Bologna and was so acute and profound a master of canon and

* S. Ammirato, Storia, Lib. xi., p. 583.
† Ibid., Lib. xvi., p. 846.
‡ M. di C. Stefani, Lib. ix., Rub. 728.



civil law that Boniface VIII. intended to make him a cardinal but was prevented by his great utility as a professor in that university. G. Villani calls him the greatest and wisest lawyer that until that time had appeared; and his scholar, and Petrarca's master, the famous Cino of Pistoia pronounced a similar judgment. His writings on professional subjects are still extant and valued, and his fame has been recorded in Latin verse by subsequent writers. Pope Boniface employed him at Rome along with William of Bergamo and Richard of Siena, (both afterwards cardinals) on the sixth and most important book of the Decretals which was entirely their compilation. Charles II. King of Naples about the same time invited him with an annual salary of a hundred ounces of gold to take the legal professorship in that capital, but he then expected a cardinal's hat and died, it is said of vexation, on his return from Rome without receiving it, and while yet in the full blaze of his renown *.

Although Florence at this epoch produced but one great civilian she gave full compensation in medicine rhetoric philosophy poetry and history: Dino del Garbo as Villani tells us, was a great philosopher, eminently skilled in many natural sciences, and the first physician in Italy. He lectured at Bologna and afterwards at Siena, in consequence of a quarrel which exalts his cunning far above his morality: he wrote commentaries on Galen, Hippocrates, and Avicenna; and also on Guido Cavalcante's celebrated Canzone about the nature and sources of love. His power of abstraction was such as to assume the appearance of ecstasy and he would often sit before his own door unconsciously twirling the rowel of a spur for a long time together while his thoughts were deep and far away. His son Tommaso, if possible more celebrated than he, was worshipped in Italy as an idol, or rather as Æscula-

* G. Villani, Storia, Lib. vii., cap. xiv. and xv.—Fil. Villani, Vite d' Uomini Illustri Fiorentini.

pius himself; the numerous lords or tyrants of Italy had faith in no skill but his, and as their remuneration was liberal his riches were immense so that he fell into habits of splendid luxurious living and abated in professional attentions though not in deep study. He also was a commentator, especially on the subject of fevers, and composed much both on the practice and theory of medicine; but his great work though left unfinished was "*La Somma di tutta la Medicina.*" As a philosopher he wrote commentaries on Aristotle's treatise upon the soul, and although blessed with a most subtle intellect his appearance is described as heavy, gross, and vulgar indicating anything but his true character, for he was lively sociable and agreeable. Filippo Villani assures us that he foretold the exact time of his death and therefore had an altar prepared in his house; heard mass; took the sacrament; and died at the predicted moment. This event is supposed to have happened somewhere between 1370 and 1375, and Sacchetti lamented his loss along with that of other celebrated Florentines in a canzone written on the decease of Boccaccio in December of the latter year.

"Lasso, che Morte in picciol tempo ha tolto
A te Fiorenza, ciascun caro e degno!
Principio fo da Pietro," &c.*

"Tommaso in questo fiotto,
Filosofo alto e dotto,
Medico non fu pare a lui Vivente," &c.†

Torregiano a cotemporary physician was fully equal if not superior to either; he studied at Bologna and lectured at Paris; commented on the Greek physicians; composed several treatises

* Alas! How Death in one brief space hath ta'en
From thee, O Florence, each dear worthy son!
With Pietro I begin! &c.

† Tommaso quits the stage,
A learned and lofty sage,
Physicians living never equalled him, &c.
(*Fil. Villani, Vite*, note).

on medical subjects, studied theology in his last years and ultimately became a Dominican monk in which profession he died before the year 1327. After digging his own grave he gave his medical writings into the hands of two Florentine monks to deposit in the university of Bologna, but they were bribed by Dino del Garbo who swearing them to secrecy most ungenerously made use of the manuscripts, and his school was suddenly seen filled with students from the deserted classes of other professors. Jealousy and injury were too keen for all this cunning; the trick was discovered; the manuscripts produced, copied, appreciated; and then published under the title of "*Torregiano more than a Commentator.*" Shame and anger drove Dino to Siena whence he never returned to Bologna though afterwards invited there, but died in 1327 *. Medicine is supposed to be now advanced to a higher state of improvement than hitherto, and chemistry, coupled with a deeper study of both morbid and healthy anatomy, has wonderfully assisted it; but whether the great Physician of Cos would if he were here receive any new light from the actual state of medicine the profession alone can judge; yet such experienced intellects as the above which were by no means rare in Italy, supported by the deep science of Greece and Arabia must have carried it to no common height, though perhaps the prevailing disorders consequent upon different habits of society and a treatment varying with the idiosyncrasy of modern and ancient men may have rendered some of their learning obsolete, effete, and inapplicable to our own times and circumstances. That there was then as now, much trickish meanness and solemn quackery can scarcely be doubted; but great minds soar above this and great minds are still great in every age and country. Petrarca it is true, despised them all as physicians, but loved several as friends; still where almost everything, as in medicine, is guesswork, he put no medical confidence in any. His friend Gio-

* Fil. Villani, Vite d' Uom. Illust. and notes.

vanni di Dondi a physician of some note who wrote on the mode of living during a plague, was in continual discussion with him on this point. "When I see a doctor come said the poet I "know all that he is going to say to me"—'Eat young "pullets, drink warm water, and use the remedy that the storks teach us,'" &c.*

Amongst Petrarch's most eminent Florentine friends was Roberto de'Bardi who was forty years chancellor of the Parisian university: he was the most celebrated theologian of the day and though a layman and unmarried, lived without reproach while he combated vice in every form. Through him the laurel crown was offered to Petrarch if he would consent to receive it at Paris, but the poet refused that honour to both Paris and Naples, and carried his fame in triumph to the Capitol.

It was a Florentine custom in those days to institute public lectures for certain periods on philosophical subjects, and amongst them rhetoric: Brunetto Latini had previously given lessons in this art which as may be imagined was held in high repute by a turbulent democracy where public speaking was absolutely necessary to the political success of private individuals. Elocution was therefore carefully taught, the intellect sharpened, and both gesture and vocal modulation were gradually moulded into grace and sweetness by the practice of a public oratory where personal defects were diligently corrected and young men prepared for after-life. Amongst the professors of this art Bruno Cassini stands preëminent in Florentine annals: he was the son of a cloth-shearer and is mentioned by cotemporaries as having possessed a rare eloquence improved by deep study and all the appliances of consummate art, but was cut off in the full glow of youthful talent during the pestilence of 1348 by which that academy along with half Florence was extinguished.

Francesco da Barberino also graces the literary history of this century as well by his talents as his benevolence in long

* De Sade, Memoire de Petrarque, vol. iii., p. 768.

and persevering efforts to correct the morals of an age when according to Dante and other writers licentiousness was wild rampant and universal. We have a specimen of this in the twenty-third Canto of his Purgatory where Forese speaking of his wife Nella is made to exclaim.

" Tant 'è a Dio più cara e più diletta
La vendovella mia che molto amai,
Quanto in bene operare è più soletta :
Chè la Barbagia di Sardinia assai
Nelle femmine sue è più pudica
Che la Barbagia dov' io la lasciai.

O dolce frate, che vuoi tu, ch' io dica ?
Tempo futuro m'è già nel cospetto
Cui non sarà quest' ora molto antica,
Nel qual srrà in pergamo interdetto
Alle sfacciate donne Fiorentine
L'andar mostrando colle poppe i petto" *.

" Barbagia" a mountainous district of Sardinia was then notorious for its savage licentiousness; and a commentator on this passage some years later says. "Now this Barbagia is everywhere: in France and Piedmont the women go with their bosoms entirely naked: in Germany, in Guelders and other places they go naked into the baths and even into the beds of men to whom they do not belong. Amongst the cities and towns of Italy how the women act and conduct themselves Heaven and also the men of the world know: it is certain that any one who considers the customs of his native town will not

* So much more dear to and approved of God
Is that dear widow'd wife I loved so well,
As she in virtuous deeds is more alone :
For the Sardinian Barbagìa 's far
More staid and modest in its female race
Than that Barbagia foul where I left her.

Sweet Brother, O what would'st thou I should say ?
The future time now presses on my sight,
To which this moment will not be antique,
When from the pulpit shall be interdict
To Fiorenza's bold unblushing dames
The wand'ring forth with naked neck and breast.

find it necessary to go in search of a Barbagia nor any other place for a comparison but may exclaim with Martial, '*In medio Tibure Sardinia est.*'"

Poggio Bracciolini in the next century, gives a similar though more charitable description of this promiscuous bathing, and Bargigi his cotemporary (an ancient commentator of Dante and perhaps the best) gives a no less unfavourable picture of manners in his own day; but with the disgusting addition of men of rank not scrupling even to prostitute their wives daughters and sisters for base and selfish interests! Indeed so common was it that no blush was raised, and society moved forward as smoothly and complacently as if still directed by innate modesty and the highest tone of morality. Landino too in his time seems to have been of Dante's opinion. "In those days," he says, "no less than in our own the Florentine ladies exposed the breast, a dress more suitable to a courtezan than a matron: but as they changed soon after by wearing collars up to the chin so I hope that they will change again; not indeed relying so much on motives of decency as through that fickleness which pervades all their actions."

Francesco da Barberino vainly endeavoured to correct all this, deeming perhaps that ink was stronger than vanity and one man's reason than the arts and passions of a multitude. His principles were, that all good and evil sprang from love, and he composed a volume in prose and verse called "*Documenti d'Amore*" wherein he treated of this passion in its virtuous and vicious character as well as of the habits necessary to form a life of decency and modesty, and the contrary. The great plague also closed his eyes at a very advanced age but left his image strongly impressed on the memory of the virtuous and humane *. The next poet of any note was Bonifazio Uberti who wandered in long exile over many countries, frequented the courts of princes, flattered, rhymed; and lived long on

* F. Villani, Vite.

their bounty: he then changed, became moral, and wrote a poem called "*Il Dittamondo*" in which, imitating Dante's "*terza rima*" he described all the countries that he had seen and many others only known to him by maps and travels. His fame must have been considerable if it be true that he received the laurel crown at Florence by a public decree. Uberti flourished about the middle of this century and amongst his cotemporaries was Francesco Cieco, or the Blind, a very celebrated musician of which Florence produced several about the same period: of these Filippo Villani particularly notices Lorenzo di Masino and Giovanni di Cascia; and Dante immortalises his friend Casella who so enchanted the souls in purgatory by singing that poet's beautiful Canzone which begins.

'*Amor, che nella mente mi ragiona*' *
"Cominciò egli allor sì dolcemente,
Che la dolcezza ancor dentro mi suona."

These *Canzoni* which we now read as poetry alone, as well as the *Madrigali*, *Ballate*, *Sonetti*, and almost all the lighter Italian compositions of that day were generally intended for vocal music, the Ballata being sung while dancing; and Dante's Blacksmith as Sacchetti tells us, even attempting to chant his Inferno as a common ballad, to the poet's extreme indignation. Such union of dance and song was the delight of Florence and probably all Italy in those romantic times; and for this reason it was perhaps adopted by Dante in his Paradise as the most popular expression of celestial joy; a thing otherwise absurd. In singing these poems to the most exquisite and touching music of his own composition Francesco Cieco excelled all others: the small-pox had deprived him of sight while yet

* This is the second Canzone of Dante's "*Convito*," and is entirely allegorical but *very* beautiful.

"*Love, who now sits reasoning in my mind*"
Commenced he then with such deep melody
That still within me all its sweetness sounds.
(*Purg.* Cant. II.)

a child but the fame of his harmony says Villani produced for him a most brilliant splendour. He was the son of a Florentine painter and learned both in philosophy and astrology, but when old enough to feel the horrors of blindness took most fondly to singing as an infantine consolation: this attachment naturally augmented with increasing years; he rambled from voice to instrument, and a sweet but lonely spirit overflowing with scientific melody soon filled his own domestic sphere. At once mastering as if by inspiration any new instrument that was presented to him he constructed another like it from the mere touch and description. Cieco ere long became the acknowledged prince of Italian musicians and was publicly crowned at Venice by the King of Cyprus, pursuant to a decree of that commonwealth. He died in 1390, full of years and honour: and thus Heaven compensates in one way what it deprives us of in another *.

Amongst the most illustrious Florentines of this or rather the preceding age, for he died in 1300, was Guido Cavalcante: as a philosopher and a poet, and as Dante's friend, he is celebrated in Florentine literature both by ancient and modern writers. Of him Dante speaks in that short but affecting interview with the spirit of his father in the tenth canto of the "*Inferno*" where old Cavalcante exclaims in anguish at the supposed death of Guido.

"Come
Dicesti, egli *ebbe*? Non viv' egli ancora?
Non fieri gli occhi suoi lo dolce lome?
Quando s'accorse d' alcuna dimora,
Ch' iò faceva dinanzi alla risposta,
Supin recadde e più non parve fuora" †.

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* Fil. Villani, Vite; also Christof. Landino's "*Apologia*," quoted in notes to the above.

† "How
Didst thou say 'He *had*?' Lives he not still?
Are then his eyes unstruck by light's sweet beam?
When he perceived my silence and the pause
Ere I could speak to give him a reply,
Supine he fell and came not forth again."

And again when he praises him and indirectly himself, like Milton, from an innate feeling of intellectual power; speaking of the Bolognese poet Guido Guinicelli whose writings had hitherto occupied the public mind, he makes Oderisi d'Agubbio, a celebrated miniature painter or illuminator of manuscripts of the day, exclaim evidently in allusion to himself,

> "Cosi ha tolto l' uno all' altro Guido
> La gloria della lingua, *e forse è nato*
> *Chi l'uno e l'altro caccerà di nido*"*.

Guido Cavalcante as we are told by his biographer Filippo Villani was a philosopher of great authority and no small estimation, adorned with a memorable dignity of conduct worthy of all praise and honour: he loved the study of rhetoric and wrote a poem on it in his native tongue which latter received from him in the opinion of his countrymen a masculine force and splendour only inferior to Dante. The subject of Love, which like its daughter Religion is indifferent to none; its nature, movements, passions, and various affections, he treated says Villani, "with extreme accuracy and acuteness of intellect in an admirable canzone where many things now no longer discussed were handled with philosophical ingenuity." This composition produced several commentators amongst the Italian philosophers and was universally applauded in an age when the ideal beauty of love had reached its acme of refinement at the same moment that the corporeal passion revelled with unbounded licence. Platonic notions of the gradations of love and beauty from the material to the spiritual then prevailed from the general study of Saint Augustine's works, and a single anecdote will be sufficient illustration of the extravagant character of this spiritual devotion.

* "Thus one Guido has from the other ta'en
The fame of letters, and *perchance is born*
One that will chase them both from out the nest."
(*Pur.* c. XI.).

One of the old chroniclers relates that being once at a party in a friend's villa not far from Florence he there became acquainted with a beautiful young woman the wife of a Florentine citizen, and according to the prevailing custom expressed his admiration of her charms, his devoted love, and implicit obedience with his readiness to undertake the most perilous adventures at her command; and all this in presence of her husband and the company without any reservation or concealment. Rome at that moment was under investment by a hostile and licentious army which not only almost precluded communication but endangered travellers throughout the whole land: to this point the lady, indisposed to receive his incense, commanded him to go, and execute some trifling commission for her sake; not supposing that in the existing state of the country he would think of obeying. But her knight was too sincere to check at any danger; he instantly departed, reached the besiegers' camp, luckily met some friends there who facilitated his entrance into Rome which in a short time he quitted, and after divers new perils succeeded in getting safely back to Florence. Throwing himself passionately at the lady's feet he related all his adventures, but was only ridiculed for endangering life to satisfy a woman who cared nothing for him or his amorous declarations.

Dino del Garbo, Egidio Colonna, and Ugo dal Como all distinguished men, besides many more modern pens have done honour to Cavalcante's genius by their notice of this celebrated canzone which is supposed, though disputed, to be in answer to a sonnet addressed to him by Guido Orlando another poet of the time, in the name of a woman, which begins,

"Onde si muove, e d'onde nasce Amore?" *

For the nature of Love was then often the subject of philoso-

* From what place does Love proceed, and where is it born?

phical and theological investigation as well as of mere poetry. His answer, commencing,

"Donna mi priega ; per ch' io voglio dire," *

and Orlando's sonnet, with many more of Cavalcante's poems may be seen in a collection of the "*Poeti del Primo Secolo*" published at Florence in 1816. He discouraged the excessive admiration of Latin, probably as hurtful to Italian literature which he admired so much and exclusively used in his poems†. These are full of strength and beauty, light and playful ; and though perhaps not so soft or quite so refined as Petrarch's, possess a more masculine character in unison with the rougher spirit of his own time and country. Guido died from the effects of a marsh fever caught in the unhealthy air of Serrezzana during his short exile already mentioned. The progeny that render Guido Cavalcante immortal, says Crescimbeni, are his noble compositions to which Italian poetry owes much, because from him it received no little strength and splendour‡.

Dante, the father of Italian verse, emphatically declares that he was "*by birth but not by habits, a Florentine*"§. He was born in 1265, and died at Ravenna in 1321. He studied under Brunetto Latini and others, was indefatigable in application, acquired all the learning of the day without neglecting its amusements or manly accomplishments in which he excelled : joining in all the pleasures of his youthful companions none ever saw him study yet he knew everything, and amongst other knowledge that of his own intellectual powers : nevertheless he appears not to have given himself up to deep philosophical studies until after the death of Beatrice.

Dante fought at the famous battle of Campaldino against the Aretines in 1289, and was noted for his courage in the fight ; he

* "A lady begs that I will please to say."

† Dante clearly alludes to this (*Inf.* Cant. X.)—"*Forse cui Guido vostro ebbe a disdegno.*"

‡ Fil. Villani, Vite, and notes.—Storia della Poesia, tom. ii., p. 266.

§ Vide Epistle to Can. della Scala.

then married Gemma Donati and like Milton ultimately parted from his wife, for a long time after living quietly in Florence. He was fourteen times employed as ambassador of the republic, and in 1300 was drawn as one of the priors. This began his misfortunes: too stern to yield against his better judgment he was marked as a victim, and banished while ambassador to Pope Boniface VIII. by a cruel retrospective enactment. Returning as far as Siena and seeing that all was over he joined the other exiles at Arezzo and assisted in the attack on Florence in 1304, but afterwards wandering over Italy he successively took refuge with Uguccione della Faggiola, then lord of Pisa, with Marchese Mavrello Malespina, Can. Grande della Scala, and ultimately with Guido da Polenta at Ravenna where he finished his mortal pilgrimage.

Dante often petitioned his countrymen both publicly and privately to recall him from banishment; but wearied with fruitless supplication, when Henry of Luxemburg became emperor he assumed a haughty and somewhat undignified tone, as relying on imperial power to reinstate the Ghibelines, yet never would appear in arms against Florence, and with Henry the Seventh's death expired the Poet's hopes of ever more visiting his native country. We have before given Giovanni Villani's character of him; but in addition, Boccaccio says that he was of polished manners, of a middle size, and in his latter years a little curved, yet always had a grave and quiet air. His face was long, his colour brown, his nose aquiline, his eyes rather large; the cheeks ample and the under lip protruding beyond the other: his beard and hair were black, thick, and curled; and his aspect that of a melancholy thoughtful man *. He was a tardy speaker but acute in his replies; of a solitary

* This description of Boccaccio perfectly coincides with Giotto's portrait of Dante, lately discovered in the Bargello, or ancient palace of the Podestà of Florence, except that there is no beard, the face young, and the hair not seen, in consequence of the head being covered with the ancient Florentine hood.

and retiring nature, but ambitiously aware of his own merit and capacity: an enemy of the wicked and of all who offended him, and an implacable censor of other people's morality. He was a plain eater, hated gluttony, drank little and was accustomed to repeat the Latin adage that "*Many seemed as if they lived to eat instead of eating to live*," an expression well introduced by Molière in his comedy of "L'Avare."

Dante hated adulation and never on any consideration refrained from giving his opinion of others: with women he assumed a gay and lively tone, but in the courts of princes he was too bold, sincere, and independent, and too much detested the vices that he witnessed either to flatter or suffer them with impunity. Though originally Guelph he belonged to the White faction and was banished with them, and like many others became a fierce Ghibeline but strongly attached to his country. Angry at an unjust condemnation he neglected the most likely means to appease his enemies, and while thinking truly that his own exile was a consequence of evil government he wanted at one and the same time to reestablish himself in Florence and reform the state *.

Dante delighted in music and was soon calmed by its sound; he studied and excelled in drawing, probably under the instructions of his friend Giotto, and wrote a beautiful hand in a long slender and correctly-formed character. He was not exempt from love, but like Cavalcanti and Petrarca with something of the more exalted feeling; something beyond and above mere animal instinct, which inspired his imagination and impassioned his verse. Beatrice de' Portinari for whom he felt an early childish attachment when she was but nine years old, influenced his whole existence while she lived, as Laura did Petrarch's, and even in death fixed his aspirations on some-

* Boccaccio, Vita di Dante, Edition 1477. — Giuseppe Pelli, Memorie di Dante, *passim*.

thing beyond the skies. She died at about twenty-four years of age the wife of Simone de' Bardi.

The "*Vita Nuova*" or *Early Life*, tells of his youthful passion for Beatrice, and is imbued with all the pensive melancholy of his character deepened by and written as a consolation for her loss; but his *Convito*, *Monarchia* and *de Vulgari Eloquio* are of another stamp. The last was left unfinished at his death and the first, the Vita, is a sort of comment on a series of poetical effusions composed on the subject of his early amour and which according to Boccaccio, he in latter years regretted having written: yet this is contrary to his own assertion in the *Convito* where we are told that "although he writes in more masculine style he does not mean to derogate a particle from the Vita Nuova but on the contrary to make it more useful by the Convito*.

The Convito or Food for the Ignorant, is a prose commentary on three of his Canzoni where in imitation of Solomon he personifies Philosophy as a woman and Study as Love: it is full of the prevailing philosophy and science of the time and makes us regret that he did not also thus illustrate the Commedia.

In the Monarchia he sustains the imperial authority as necessary, and inherent in the Roman people by divine will, independent of the pope; yet does it entirely as a Ghibeline partisan, ingeniously, but feebly. This work was condemned to the flames by Gregory XXII. and Cardinal Poïet who would have burned Dante's heretical bones along with it had not the latter been withstood by Pino della Tosa of Florence and Ostagio da Polenta lord of Ravenna.

In his Vulgari Eloquio he treats of language in general with some curious passages on its grand European divisions; but the Italian tongue and verse are its principal subjects. Besides these he wrote seven paraphrases of the penitential Psalms and other religious pieces, many Latin epistles public

* Convito, cap. i°.

and private and also as is said, (but this is perhaps more than doubtful) a lost history of the Guelphs and Ghibelines.

Some of his letters are missing, but the sonnets, canzoni, and other minor poetry form no inconsiderable part, and perhaps some of the most beautiful and poetical of his writings *.

To speak of the poet Dante is to praise him; and to praise him would be acting like the eulogist of Hercules. He stands conspicuous; a bold isolated rock! As Mont Blanc amidst the Alps so towers he above his less aspiring fellows, and although neither so soft nor so beautiful as some, he awes by his gloomy grandeur and commands by the stern and lofty bearing of his mind.

In that great moral, religious, theological, and philosophical poem the "*Divina Commedia*" he disdains a middle flight, and summons the aid of history as a mere auxiliary to illustrate his theme, or as a channel of boiling vituperation. He rejects nothing: Scripture, fable, mythology, astrology, philosophy, physics and metaphysics; from the vilest and most loathful matter to the sublimest conceptions of a poetical imagination; all are cited and all are made his slaves!

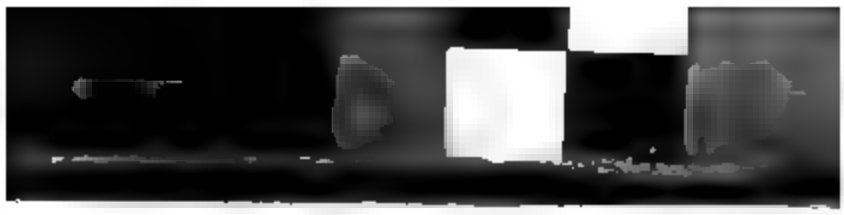
As an erring man we first behold the poet wandering astray and entangled in worldly temptations: he feels his danger; we see him pause, hesitate, resist; and finally appeal to human reason for present succour. Reason embodied in the person Virgil and sent by Beatrice (whom, as he promised in his "Vita Nuova," he thus immortalises) descends to his aid and leading him through all the pains of hell and sorrows of purgatory which are vividly impressed on his mind, delivers him safely to Beatrice. She as the personification of Theology after forcing from him an acknowledgment of past errors, unfolds the joys of Heaven and enables him to recover

* See the very valuable edition of Dante's minor poems by my worthy and talented friend P. J. Fraticelli of Florence.—Pelli, Mem. di Dante, *passim*.

the path of virtue. These vast flights through hell, purgatory, and paradise, open the whole universe to his gaze and with a giant's grasp and a magician's wand he commands it all. At first rough and coarse, sometimes even disgusting, yet often pathetic soft and harmonious; he suits the verse to his subject and scene and toils in a long and fearful journey through gloom and suffering to the light of day. Cheered and freshened by the brighter world he continues in a still melancholy but softer strain, and finally relieves the wearied mind from its long and painful oppression. Brighter thoughts and hopes, and more cheerful converse carry him with lighter step and augmenting pleasure to his trial's end on the heights of purgatory where the terrestrial paradise bursts upon his view! Here he wanders with heavenly shapes, through yet untasted pleasures, and becomes a new creature all joy, all intellect, all beatitude, until Beatrice descends to waft him into a still higher sphere where his softened verse re-echoes universal harmony as the rapt spirit mingles with those brighter beings of an eternal world!

Dante's original intention was to write the Divina Commedia in Latin verse, but fearing if thus sealed to the many it would speedily sink into oblivion he wisely changed his mind, and is supposed to have finished seven cantos of the Inferno before his exile from Florence. This fact is disputed; but if we may trust Sacchetti a cotemporary, who makes him quarrel with an ass-driver and a blacksmith on two separate occasions for repeating his verses improperly, it will prove the truth of Boccaccio's relation, which originally came from Dante's nephew Andrea di Leon Poggi*. Andrea asserted that amongst the papers which Gemma Donati succeeded in concealing from the populace when his property as an exile was plundered, were the first seven cantos of this poem; these were given to Dino Frescobaldi a cotemporary poet who imme-

* Sacchetti, Novelli, cxiv., cxv.



diately transmitted them to Dante himself, then living with Maorello Malespina in Lunigiana.

But if Sacchetti speaks true these cantos or parts of them must not only have been written but published amongst the people long before, else how could a common blacksmith and dustman have become acquainted with them? The name of "*Commedia*" has puzzled many, and even Dante's own explanation is hardly satisfactory: in his dedicatory epistle of the Paradise to Can della Scala he thus entitles it "*Here begins the Comedy of Dante Alighieri a Florentine by birth, not manners.*" And with relation to this he says that it is good to know that *comedy* is derived from two Greek words signifying *villa* or village and *canto* a song, hence it may be translated "*canto villereccio*" or "*rustic song.*" "Comedy" he says, "is in fact a species of poetical narration differing from all others, and in its matter it thus differs from tragedy. The latter is in its commencement admirable and quiet and in its end horrible and offensive. Comedy on the other hand begins roughly but its matter ends prosperously; as is shown in Terence's comedies. In their mode of speech also tragedy and comedy differ, for one is elevated and sublime, the other remiss and poor, and from this it is plain why the present work is called comedy; for if the matter be examined it will be found in the beginning offensive and horrible, because it is hell; and in the end desirable and grateful, because it is paradise. If we examine the mode of speaking it is relaxed and humble, because it is in the vulgar tongue in which even weak women communicate. And thus is manifest why it is called comedy" *.

This explanation was not so satisfactory to modern critics as to prevent another, or rather a modification of it being adduced from the "*Vulgare Eloquio;*" there Dante separates poetry into three different styles, tragic, comic, and elegiac: to the

* Epistle to Can Grande della Scala, Fraticelli's Edition, Florence, 1840.

first he assigns the lofty superior style, to the second the inferior, and to the third the plaintive. "If the subject be tragic then it becomes necessary to use the illustrious or noble vulgar, ("*Vulgare Illustre*") and consequently to fetter the verse: but if the comic be chosen sometimes the middle vulgar and sometimes the humble should be adopted"*. And because he used the middle style it is argued that he called his poem a comedy. This work was so rapidly appreciated that notwithstanding some of the envious called Dante the "*Shoemakers and Bakers' Poet;*" only fifty-two years after his death Boccaccio was nominated by the Florentines as public lecturer and expounder of the persecuted exile's work in order that those who knew no Latin might be stimulated by it to fly from vice and nourish virtue †.

These lectures commenced in the church of San Stefano near Ponte Vecchio, on the twenty-third of October 1373 but were interrupted by Boccaccio's death before the seventeenth canto was finished ‡. Nor was Dante's fame confined to Florence: Pisa, Milan, and Venice followed her example, and though he has given occupation to the pens of commentators for upwards of five hundred years his works are not yet completely interpreted: the Latin, French, English, Spanish, and German tongues give his sense and echo his words, but the poetic atmosphere that envelopes them can never be translated §.

While yet alive Dante's person and works, especially the Inferno, were familiar to everybody in the north of Italy, and Boccaccio tells us that one day while walking along with some friends in the streets of Verona and passing a door where certain women were assembled one of them, without intending to be overheard, exclaimed in a low voice, "Look! look! That is the gentleman who goes to hell and comes back when

* Del Volgare Linguaggio, Libro ii°, cap. iv,

† Filelfo, Defesa di Dante, tom. xii., —Delizie degli Eruditi Toscani.—S. Ammirato, Storia, Lib. xiii., p. 689.

‡ Diario di Monaldi.

§ Giuseppe Pelli, Mem. di Dante, *passim*.

he pleases, and brings us news from the people there below." To which another immediately replied, "You say true, and look at his face and beard, how dark and curled they are from the smoke and heat of those places"! Dante hearing these words, coming as they did from the simplicity of the speakers, was much amused, and passed on smiling well pleased that they should remain of that opinion*.

We have not yet done with the great Florentines of this age; another hardly second to Dante follows; like him also a fugitive and though not himself banished, yet an exile from the same cause. Garzo the great grandfather of Petrarch was a Florentine notary who after a life of one hundred and four years died in the same bed in which he was born! Petracco his grandson was also a notary, a profession then held in high repute, especially at Florence; and as Dante was falsely accused of extortion in his public official conduct, so was Petracco accused of drawing out a fraudulent act in his professional capacity and condemned to a fine of 1000 florins besides the loss of his hand if the penalty were left unpaid ten days after he should be taken: but he had already escaped from his enemies along with Dante and the united white and Ghibeline faction.

Petrarca, or Petrarcha as it was formerly written; called also Francesco di Petracco according to the then mode of distinction, was born at Arezzo on the twentieth of July 1304, the same night that his father, Dante, and the other Ghibelines, principally by that poet's advice, made their final attempt on Florence, the failure of which destroyed every hope and Petracco settled at Avignon. It is needless to say much of Petrarch: he has written his own memoirs which his fame has made precious, and what was wanting has been well supplied by De Sade with much research, ability, and interest to his readers. The poet himself informs us that he was born in

* Boccaccio, Vita di Dante, cap. xviii., Ed. in Black Letter, Venice. By Vindelin di Spira, An. Dom. 1477.

the Borgo dell' Orto of Arezzo; that he had not much physical strength but great agility; that his figure was not fine enough for vanity but such as in early youth would please. White hairs began to appear with the down on his chin, which, as he was told, gave him a certain air of dignity and added no little ornament to his features; but did not please him the more for this, because it detracted from his youthful aspect which he always regarded with great complacency. He had a brilliant complexion between white and brown, lively eyes; and for many years a particularly acute vision, which to his surprise began to fail after sixty and compelled him to use spectacles. His parents while in exile were of moderate fortune inclining to poverty and he himself being neither rich nor poor, had fewer wants and greater abundance, more tranquillity and less covetousness of worldly wealth. He was averse to riches, not because he despised them but because of the cares by which they are accompanied: he eat little food and that simple, disliked entertainments as scenes of gluttony injurious to modesty and morality, therefore was averse either to give them at home or partake of them at the houses of others. But small dinners with one or two friends were his delight and he never willingly dined or supped alone: Petrarch was far from immaculate; he sinned, despised his own weakness, condemned the sin, and then repeated it: but this "was of earth, earthy." He had one real, honest, long-enduring affection, which death alone interrupted at a time when it had already begun to abate from its pristine ardour. He says: "I loved a woman whose mind unacquainted with worldly cares burned with celestial desires; in whose countenance, if there is truth on earth, were reflected the rays of divine beauty; whose manners were examples of perfect modesty, and so expressed in gesture look and voice that no human thing was ever equal to it. I will express all briefly. Laura appeared before my eyes in my early youth on the morning of the sixth

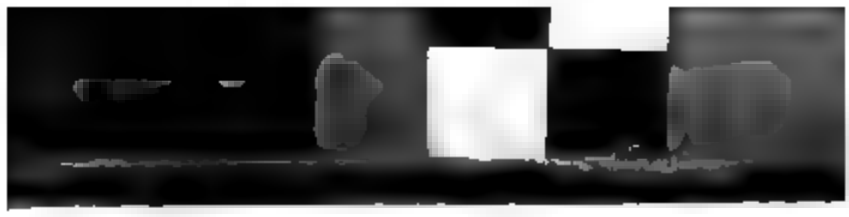
of April 1327 in the church of Santa Chiara at Avignon, and in the same city, in the same month of April, on the same sixth day, in the same first hour, and in the year 1348; from *this* light, *that* light was taken, while I was haply at Verona, ignorant, alas! of my destiny. I heard the sad tidings in Parma by a letter from my Lodovico on the morning of the nineteenth of May of the same year. Her most chaste body was on the same day of her death, at vespers, deposited in a fitting place belonging to the minor friars, and her soul I believe, as Seneca said of Africanus, is restored to that heaven from which it came. I loved the virtues of Laura, which are not spent, wherefore I will never set my heart on any mortal thing, but will solace myself in her soul, in her heavenly manners; and her example is an argument to me of the life of celestial beings. In my affection there was no baseness, no impurity; nothing culpable except in its excess. Nay I will not be silent: the little that I am, I owe to that woman: and if I perchance have acquired any fame or glory, I should never have acquired it had not the puny seed of virtue implanted by nature in my mind been cultivated by her with so noble an affection. Yes she weaned me, and with a hook, as it were, drew my young intellect from every low idea and compelled me to fix it on sublimer things; so true is it that love assumes the form and character and identifies itself with the beloved object. But there never was a slanderer so base as to touch with a pungent or mordacious word her spotless character; not one who ever dared to affirm, I will not say in her acts, but even in the movement of her voice, that there was anything reprehensible"*.

Thus adoring, all his actions were framed to please the idol, and thus Laura, like Beatrice, influenced his whole life. He was passionate and often disdainful but not vain, if his estimate

* Memorie della Vita di Francesco Petrarca, which he left written amongst his Latin works.—Molini Firenze, 1822.

of himself be correct; easily forgetting injuries and steady in friendship. With a judgment more solid than acute he possessed a clear and powerful eloquence and was much employed as an ambassador: intended and educated for the bar he quitted all such studies the moment he was free from domestic control; not from any dislike to the acquirement of a science which he honoured, but from a more generous motive: because in practice its character was so depraved by the malice and selfishness of man that he was averse to learn that which he could not honestly make use of without infinite labour, and in doing so would have had his integrity attributed to ignorance.

As in private society when decency is discarded the range of humour is extended, so in that of nations we sometimes see that where honesty is trampled upon human energy is in more vigorous though pernicious activity: no wonder then that this age was bold, daring, and energetic; ambition and rapacity were the ruling powers; but the former was local, dispersed, broken into a thousand fragments: each predominant spirit was great within the narrow limits of its country; yet few filled all Italy with their fame, and scarcely any had a general European reputation. A multitude of fierce and brilliant fires were burning both for good and evil, the common illumination was splendid and equalised; Europe gazed at it from afar with admiration, perhaps respect, but only knew it as a whole. In this state literature alone became the object of general interest; it spread with a universal light, it belonged to all countries and no faction; tyrants, kings, and republics equally honoured it, and the fame of its leaders overspread the earth. The conjuncture favoured it, for Italian language was yet in its infancy, Latin corrupted, and it became an object to separate the child from a vitiated parent and reform the latter. A host of intellect burst upon the world, and led by Dante permanently stamped its character on the fourteenth century. In this way Petrarch became the property not only of Italy



but of Europe; in an humble and retired cottage at Vaucluse attended only by his rustic old man and woman, he received on the same day letters from the Roman senator and the chancellor of the Parisian university, calling upon him as in rivalry to receive the laurel crown, one at Rome the other at Paris. The venerable name of Rome, her antique glory, and his own reverence for the Eternal City, finally prevailed, and in his six-and-thirtieth year Naples received him with honour on his way to the capitol. There a new triumph awaited him, for Robert the most learned monarch and one of the most learned men of that day, after some severe examinations added his testimony to the general voice, and entreated that Naples might be the scene of his coronation. But Rome still prevailed and on the twenty-third of August 1340 Petrarca received the laurel crown, by which, as he tells us, he acquired no science but much envy*.

At this time he was employed on a Latin epic poem wherein under the title of *Africa* he celebrated the exploits of Scipio Africanus; and this unlucky preference of a dead to a living language, notwithstanding Dante's wiser example, has principally consigned it to oblivion: yet it was almost entirely to this poem that he owed the laurel and it received the highest praise from King Robert and Coluccio Salutati, neither of them a mean judge. But Petrarch kept it hidden, probably formed a more correct estimate himself, latterly disliked its being mentioned, and finally as is said intended to burn it but had not the resolution to destroy so long and interesting a labour †.

The "Triumphs" seem also to have run some risk, not from himself but his executors, yet happily have survived and reached us untouched, with all their faults and all their beauties: his canzoni, sonnets, and smaller poems will ever be read with intense interest while love grief and poetry continue

* De Sade, vol. i., Lib. ii., p. 428.—Memorie di Petrarca, Scritte da se stesso.
† De Sade, vol. iii., Liv. vi., p. 806, &c.

to influence the human heart and expand its most gentle affections.

It is a curious circumstance that notwithstanding their close friendship and constant epistolary intercourse Petrarch never showed Boccaccio his "Africa," and never saw the latter's "Decameron" until a few months before his own death, when chance placed it in his hands at Arquà. De Sade surmises that Petrarch knowing Boccaccio's discernment was unwilling to show him a poem which he himself so lowly appreciated; and the latter shrunk from presenting a collection of loose and frivolous tales to a person of so grave and delicate a mind, which was offended at the slightest breach of modesty *. This however is unlikely because the Decameron had been many years published, neither was there much cause of fear for on meeting with that work he wrote as follows to Boccaccio. "Having run "but hastily over this book I can scarcely judge, but it has "given me great pleasure; what is too free must be sufficiently "excused by your age when it was written, the language in "which you wrote, the lightness of the subject, and the persons "for whom it was intended. Amongst many gay and trifling "things some grave and pious are to be found. I have done "like all the world; I have dwelt most on the beginning and "the end. The description you give at the commencement, "of the state of our country during the plague seems to be very "true and very pathetic. The finishing story has made so "strong an impression upon me that I have committed it to "memory for the purpose of relating it to my friends in society." Petrarch was in fact so pleased with the tale of Griselda that making some alterations he translated it into Latin for the amusement of those who were ignorant of the Italian language. One of his friends at Padua attempted to read it aloud but was twice prevented by his tears: another at Verona on hearing this made a similar effort and succeeded without any apparent

* De Sade, vol. iii., Liv. vi., p. 810.

emotion: on returning the volume he said, "I must admit "that it is a touching story, and I also should have wept had "I believed it true; but it is clearly fabulous. There never "was and there never will be such a woman as Griselda"*. This letter to Boccaccio was accompanied by Petrarca's Latin translation and is probably the last epistle he ever wrote: its date is June 1374, and the poet was found dead in the library of his residence at Arquà on the eighteenth of July, his head resting quietly on a book! Whereupon it was said that he passed from the quiet of study to the quiet of the grave†. Petrarch had enlarged and liberal notions; he seems to be the first who asserted the principle that punishment should be inflicted not as vengeance for crimes but to prevent their repetition.

He seems also to have had some indistinct notions of the new world; if we may judge from the fourth canzone of Marsand's edition, and again in the first *Sestina*.

"Nella stagion che 'l ciel rapido inchina
Verso occidente, e che 'l dì nostro vola
A gente che di là forse l' aspetta, &c."‡

"Quando la sera scaccia il chiaro giorno,
E le tenebre nostra altrui fann' alba"§.

Petrarch influenced the literature of his age as well from his genius as his indefatigable search after Greek and Latin manuscripts in which he was ably seconded by Boccaccio, and subsequently followed with greater success by Poggio Bracciolini:

* De Sade, Mem., vol. iii., Lib. vi., p. 796.

† Ibid. Lib. vi., p. 799.—Maffei, Stor. della Letteratura Ital.

‡ "In that same season when our sun inclines
Towards the west and our bright daylight flies
To people that perhaps expect him there."
(*Canzone* IV.)

§ "When evening drives the clear daylight away
And our dim night to others makes the dawn."
(*Sestina* I^a.)

where he could not get the originals he procured copies, but often bursts forth into angry invectives against the careless ignorance and neglect of the whole race of copyists. "You know," he says in a letter to Boccaccio, "You know what the copyists are, they never finish, and make good authors despair. Whether from ignorance negligence or contempt they write anything but what is given them to copy." And again. "Who can apply an effective remedy to the base ignorance of the copyists that spoil and entangle everything? Through fear of this many able geniuses keep aloof from publishing immortal works; a just judgment on this our indolent age in which not books but only the kitchen is attended to, and cooks are examined instead of authors. Wherefore every one who knows in any way how to illuminate parchment and manage the pen, although he be completely destitute of learning, of skill, or of genius, acquires the reputation of a writer. I do not now speak of nor quarrel with orthography, which has been for a long time extinct: Heaven grant that in any mode whatever they would write what is given them to copy; the copyist's ignorance would be seen, but the substance of the book would be preserved. These on the contrary confounding the copy and original, after promising to write one thing, write something entirely different, and in such a way that the author knows not what he himself has dictated. Dost thou believe that if Cicero, Livy, and many other celebrated ancient writers, and more especially the second Pliny were to return and commence reading their own books that they would understand them? or that they would not, on the contrary, while hesitating at every passage, believe them either to be the works of others or the dictation of barbarians? What shall I say of our nobles who not only suffer literature to perish but earnestly wish it? Surely the disparagement and hatred of so noble a thing will ere long plunge us into the abyss of ignorance. It may be added that there is no curb nor law for such copyists, who are

chosen without examination or proof. The blacksmith, the cultivator, the weaver, and other artificers have no such liberty; and although the danger be infinitely less as regards these, and infinitely more as regards those, all of them nevertheless promiscuously undertake to write and there is even a fixed price for these barbarous destroyers"*. The ignorance of Italian nobles and princes is also alluded to by Dante† and the invention of printing has fortunately superseded the employment of copyists, but the letters of Petrarch on this subject are instructive, inasmuch as they prove the fallaciousness of all manuscripts even when there is no temptation for the copyists to deceive; how much more so then are those to be suspected which treat of religion, where negligence ignorance and sectarian spirit were often combined with bigotry to distort them.

Petrarch's great friend Giovanni Boccaccio, the son of Boccaccio Chellino of Certaldo, sprang from an illicit attachment at Paris in 1313. His mother, a young Parisian lady, died soon after his birth; he was brought to Florence when quite a child and as is supposed saw Dante at Ravenna when about seven years old. Boccaccio was at first educated for a merchant like most of the Florentines, then studied the canon law but entirely against his taste, wherefore after visiting the tomb of Virgil near Naples he could no longer restrain himself and resolved to dedicate his life to literature. The Latin classics and Dante absorbed him; for the latter he had the most profound veneration, and finally stirred up the Florentines to pay his memory the respect of publicly reading the Divina Commedia. At Naples he was much noticed by King Robert to whom Dante alludes in the eighth canto of Paradise as being too much addicted to literature to govern well. Addressing mankind, the spirit of Dante's friend Charles Martel of Hungary exclaims—

* De Sade, Mem., vol. iii., Lib. vi., p. 668.—Vide Giuseppe Maffei, Stor. della Letterat. Italian.

† Convito, cap. ix., pp. 60, 61.

" Ma voi torcete alla religïone
Tal che fu nato a cingersi la spada,
E fate Re di tal, ch' è da sermone ;
Onde la traccia vostra è fuor di Strada " *.

Boccaccio became intimate with many learned men at Naples, and amongst others with Petrarca at whose examination for the laurel by King Robert he was present, and so astonished was the novelist at his powers that he ever afterwards called him master. At Naples in the church of Saint Lorenzo the Sunday before Easter 1341, he saw and fell in love with the beautiful Maria d'Aquino a natural but unacknowledged daughter of King Robert and the wife of a Neapolitan nobleman. Of her person he gives us a minute and glowing picture such as might be expected from Boccaccio in love; but the amour does him no credit if it is true that he insinuated himself into the husband's intimacy to seduce the wife †.

Neither the calm of her past life, fears of the future, or her union with a young and indulgent husband had power to save her.—She fell and tasted sorrow.—It was the custom of that age and especially at Naples where Provençal manners had become indigenous, for the young assemblies of both sexes to converse on love, propose questions in its courts, discuss its nature and affections. dwell on the generous devotion, magnanimity, and enterprise that this passion inspired, and to read with avidity every song. novel. or romance, that treated on the favourite subject: and with what effect we have a painfully touching instance in Paulo and Francesco di Rimini.

Many of these histories were not written, but passed from mouth to mouth through the social world: even Petrarch in his last days committed, as we have seen, the story of Griselda

* " But ye perversely to religion strain
Him who was born to gird on him the sword,
And of the fluent phraseman make your king:
Therefore your steps have wandered from the paths."
(*Cary's Dante.*)

† Baldelli, Vita di Giov. Boccaccio.

to memory for the purpose of narrating it to his friends; and none knew more or could tell them better than Boccaccio. At his mistress's request he recorded the then popular tale of "Florio and Biancafiore" in a romance under the title of "*Filocopo*" or the Lover of Labour.

This gentle intercourse was suddenly interrupted by Boccaccio's unexpected recall to Florence; and Maria's despair, and hopes, and fears, and love, and jealousy, and distraction, form the subject of his "*Fiammetta*" which he feigns to be written by her as a warning and example to those who are in danger of being overborne by love. He then wrote his "*Teseide*" or the exploits of Theseus, an epic poem which was dedicated to La Fiammetta; and afterwards, as a solace for the dulness of home the "*Ameto*" or "*Commedia delle Ninfe Fiorentine*," a sort of Cymon who on the banks of the Mugnone in company with a bevy of Florentine girls is converted from a rude insensible clown to a gentle lover. But the tale is by some supposed to be an allegory the nymphs being the Virtues who gradually extend their influence over Ameto's mind; yet the stories are all real, and the speakers Florentine ladies under feigned names. After this Giovanni returned to Naples was favoured by queen Giovanna who delighted in his novels and particularly as it would seem in the most licentious: but though in after life he condemned his Decameron and implored Mainardo Cavalcante to keep it from his daughters as he valued their morals; yet he never censured but on the contrary vindicated queen Giovanna's conduct. In consequence of some question discussed in the Neapolitan court of love where he and his Fiammetta were present, he addressed a poem to her, in *ottava rima* (of which he is said to have been the inventor) describing the loves of Troilus and Cressida, which perhaps may have suggested Chaucer's tale, and called it *Filostrato:* this was followed by the "*L' Amorosa Visione*," also addressed to La Fiammetta, and then besides other works the "*Ninfale Fiesolano*" or the loves

of the *Affrico* and *Mensola* two small Fiesoline streams near Florence; and this assemblage of mythological tales has made the plain between Florence and Fiesole classic ground. As a lyric poet Boccaccio is not much esteemed, and indeed felt himself so subdued by Petrarch's poetry that he was on the point of committing all his own to the flames.

His Decameron or hundred tales was commenced during the plague and was written as he said to amuse the fair sex (to which he was devoted) because they were in his opinion restrained too much in their pleasures by fathers husbands and brothers, confined to the small circuit of their apartments, and idly employed in not always the most agreeable reflections. But his admirers give him the further credit of writing these amusing stories to dissipate by a keen satire the cloud of vulgar errors then prevalent; to expose monastic hypocrisy and licentiousness, and to exhibit examples of human life in all its variety of rank and character, of mean and noble, bad and good, and for universal instruction. Part of the lesson would no doubt be easily learned but the moral effect is questionable. This work is generally considered as a model of Italian prose, and along with Dino Compagni and Giovanni Villani became the standard of subsequent writers. A work like the Decameron might have passed uncensured by the church if the church had been left inviolate; but priests and monks were unmasked and the author was justly and with great advantage assailed by them for his immorality: this was strong ground, and eight years after its appearance Boccaccio himself was converted and led the way in condemnation of his own writings.

A holy man of the Senese Certosa called Pietro Petroni sent a brother named Giovacchino Ciani to the novelist with earnest remonstrances and exhortations to reform. Ciani seems to have performed his task with the boldness and inspiration of a prophet and foretold a speedy and miserable end if Petroni's dying words were slighted. Boccaccio trembled: he instantly

wrote to Petrarch for advice; told him that he would abandon literature, sell his books, and pass the rest of his life in solitude and repentance. The lover of Laura was of a more regulated mind; he was no epicurean, more refined, more even in his movements than Boccaccio, and not open to superstitious fears, he freely examined the nature of this prophecy, exposed the folly of abandoning literature because a friar exhorted him to reform which, good in itself, might be accomplished without running into so violent an extreme: at his age and with his infirmities it required no prophetic monk to foretel the chance of death and with this in view, says Petrarca, "Leave worldly folly, bad habits, and the remnants of old pleasures; compose your mind and manners in front of a better mirror; change useless novels for the records and laws of God; and as for that ever-sprouting plant of vice from which you have hitherto with difficulty lopped the branches, cut it down now and completely eradicate it. Use your powers of verse and prose, of which you are no longer a disciple but an old master, use them according to your own discretion; you know which to keep and which to reject; literature augments the soul's goodness and awakens it to honour, and so far from retarding, urges it on in the true course of life." He then offers him a home in his house, and advises him to keep his books, but if determined to sell them declares that he will be the purchaser.

This letter which is very long, eloquent, and sensible, restored Boccaccio to reason and made him combine Ciani's and Petrarch's counsels.—His Decameron troubled him most: in a letter to his friend Mainardo Cavalcanti he says, "Leave my novels to the wanton slaves of passion who wish to be thought the frequent contaminators of female modesty; and if you will have no mercy on the decency of your own females, spare at least my honour if you bear me sufficient affection to shed tears for my sufferings. In reading them they will consider me a base pander, a sensual and depraved old man; an impure

slanderous person; and an eager propagator of others' wickedness. Nobody will anywhere rise in my defence: I wrote as a young man and I was forced to it by an authoritative command."—This command is supposed to have come from Queen Giovanna, and the letter was written in consequence of Cavalcante having promised to let the ladies of his family read the Decameron, which if he did, Boccaccio tells him, and that their morals suffered in consequence, on his own head not theirs would be the sin and blame; "*Wherefore I beseech you, and I repeat it; I implore you by my counsel and by my prayers not to do so.*"

Five hundred years have not abstracted a particle of wisdom from this earnest exhortation which modern female readers of the Decameron would do well to ponder. Boccaccio was ever a warm admirer and champion of Dante and by sending the Divina Commedia a present to Petrarch drew from him a cold but decided denial of opinions then generally entertained, that he was either envious or insensible of that great poet's excellence. Petrarch was deeply imbued with the classic spirit of the time and undervalued everything in a language to which he himself is indebted for his fame and which Dante characterises as nearly equal to Latin for lofty expression and full of the sweetest and most amiable beauties*. Dante and Boccaccio saw further, for at that epoch the use of Italian as a channel of general communication was already become what printing soon became to manuscript; readers were indefinitely multiplied, thought was once more unshackled, new ideas burst upon the world in all the freshness of awakened intellect; the Italian works of Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Sacchetti, and others spread rapidly over Italy while the Latin compositions were then confined to the learned and have been generally neglected by posterity. Boccaccio died in 1375 shortly after he had begun his public lectures and comment on Dante, whose life he wrote after his conversion in 1361. He was handsome in

* Convito, cap. x., pp. 70, 71, 12° Ed. of Fraticelli.

person, tall and well proportioned, with a fine face; the nose rounded over the nostrils; an animated eye, a nicely chiselled though rather a capacious mouth and a chin that was beautiful when he smiled; gay, affable and fluent his expressions were rendered more graceful by natural urbanity, and every movement added dignity to a certain haughtiness of demeanour which generally kept him at a distance from men of higher rank; and this he preserved to his death*.

The two eldest Villani have already been noticed: Filippo was less renowned but still generally esteemed, especially for his Lives of Illustrious Florentines which though meagre are interesting. Coluccio Piero Salutati, for many years secretary of the republic and a friend of Petrarch's, shone out brightly in classic lore, he also was a poet but acquired more fame by the force and elegance of his Latin epistles of which he wrote multitudes, than by any other work. So eloquent and effective were these compositions that according to Ammirato Gian-Galeazzo Visconte declared he was less alarmed at an army of twenty thousand men than at one single letter of Coluccio's. He died early in the fifteenth century after a life, as Villani tells us, unstained by vice; and was still living when that author wrote.

Zanobi di Strada a Florentine schoolmaster and the son of a schoolmaster, added considerable renown to this age of literature: he rose through the favour of his compatriot Nicolo Acciaioli Grand Seneschal of Naples, himself a man of no mean fame, and by his influence received the poet's crown from the emperor Charles IV. at Pisa in 1355, much as it would seem to the annoyance of Petrarch. In 1395 as memorials of the honour reflected on Florence, by Accursio, Dante, Petrarch, Zanobi, and Boccaccio, a monument was decreed to each by the republic but never erected †.

Francesco Sacchetti was a cotemporary but younger than Boccaccio whom he long survived, and died in 1400. He was much employed as well as the latter in public embassies and

* Baldelli, Vita di Boccaccio, *passim*. † S. Ammirato, Lib. xvi., p. 855

was well qualified for them by his learning talent and agreeable qualities which made him universally welcome. Sacchetti's fame rests principally on his novels which are amusing, and interesting from the portraits they present of the form and pressure of the age, but accompanied by nearly all Boccaccio's licentiousness. He wrote three hundred, but only two hundred and fifty-eight are extant, most of them original anecdotes and therefore a sort of private history of his time, which imparts an interest they might not otherwise obtain or perhaps deserve; yet the style is considered extremely pure and the tales flow easily. Sacchetti must have been intellectually beyond his age for he openly ridiculed judicial astrology which was then and for nearly two centuries after implicitly believed in by some of the wisest intellects; even Dante in his Paradise acknowledges the stellar influence though not man's power of interpretation *.

Amongst all the Florentines of this age Agnolo Pandolfino born in 1365, is considered for purity of style and solidity of matter one of the most famous: he served in the highest offices of state, but his political career belongs to the fifteenth cen-

* This is evident throughout the Paradise, but especially in the following verses of Canto XXII. :—

"O gloriose stelle, O Lume pregno
Di gran virtù, dal quale io riconosco
Tutto (qual che si sia) lo mio ingegno
Con voi nasceva, e s'ascondeva vosco
Quegli ch' è' padre d'ogni mortal vita,
Quand' io sentì' da prima l'aer tosco:
E poi quando mi fu grazia largita
D'entrar nell'alta ruota che vi gira
La vostra region mi fu sortita."

"O glorious stars! O Light impregnate
With surpassing virtue, from which I own
All I possess of intellectual power,
With you arose and set again with you
He the great Sire of every mortal life
When first I breathed the vital tuscan air:
And after, when by grace I was allowed
To enter the great wheel that moves thee round,
Thy blessed region fate assigned me still."

tury. His celebrated treatise "*Del Governo della Famiglia*" both in style and morality is considered one of the best works in the Italian language*.

The fine arts still continued to be cultivated with ardour, and if in 1300 there were no less than a hundred second-rank painters in Florence they were probably not diminished in the fourteenth century; but no subsequent artist surpassed or even equalled Giotto who as already noticed ran far into the present period. Small progress was made beyond him; except perhaps by a little more brilliancy of colouring, for about a hundred and twenty years when Massaccio stept suddenly forth and gave a fresh and powerful impetus to pictorial art.

Andrea Orcagna who lived through the greater part of this century was also eminent in sculpture, but excelled more in architecture than either: it was he who first substituted the circular for the pointed arch in Florence as may be seen in that fine portico near the old palace. Andrea was assisted by his brother Bernardo a man of inferior talent but probably equal to Bonamico di Cristofano, better known as Buffalmacco, and more notorious for his humour than renowned for his painting. He was the pupil of Tafi, and figures in Sacchetti's and Boccaccio's tales. The "*Creation*" in the Campo Santo of Pisa is by his hand and along with his pupil Bruno di Giovanni, Nelli di Dino, and Calandrino, furnished matter for Boccaccio's eighth day, as Bartolo Gioggi did to Sacchetti †.

The number of painters was so increased at Giotto's death in 1336, that about thirteen years after they formed themselves into a religious society called the Company of Saint Luke, which though consisting of painters and carvers in wood, or workers in metal, was, as regarded drawing, only a pious assembly not a school of art.

Towards the end of this century wood-carving began to improve from the encouragement given in the architectural decorations of altars which were constantly becoming more elaborate.

* Giuseppe Maffei, Storia della Letteratura Italiana. † Novello 170.

Giovanni da Ponte, Mariotto, Tommaso di Marco, Bernardo Nello, Nello di Vanni, and Francesco Triani besides others; some Florentine, some Pisan; all issued from Giotto and Orcagna's school, none of much note except Triani of whom a large painting of St. Thomas d'Aquinas glorified, still remains in the church of Saint Catherine at Pisa, the composition of which is admired.

In taking leave of this century we are reminded that at certain epochs in the world's progress there is sometimes a majestic race of spirits that suddenly cross our view and carrying everything they touch to perfection; they then gradually disappear and leave their fame for future ages to admire and fully appreciate.

The fourteenth century and part of the thirteenth, was one of these glorious periods in Florentine history, and the mind is struck with wonder to behold from one small city in one single century shine out so bright an assemblage of fresh and lofty intellects. In law, in physic, in theology philosophy and rhetoric; in prose and poetry, in history, ethics, epistolary writing, sculpture architecture and painting; it produced, not one, but several of the highest order of genius, men of no doubtful fame, some of whom feared the point of Dante's poetical aphorism scarcely more than the bard himself*.

The four Accorsi, the two Del Garbos, Alderotti, Torregiano,

* " Non è il mondan romore altro ch' un fiato
Di vento ch'or vien quinci ed or vien quindi,
E muta nome perchè muta lato.
Che fama Avrai tu più, se vecchia scindi
Da te la carne, che se fossi morto
Innanzi che lasciassi il pappo è 'l dindi,
Pria che passin mill' anni?"—(*Purg. Canto* XI.)

All worldly praise is nothing but a breath
Of wind, which now this way and now that way blows,
And changes name just as it changes sides.
What greater fame hast thou, if age strip off
From thee thy flesh, than if thy death had come
Before the pap and play-things were left off,
Before a thousand years?

Cassini, Bardi, Dino di Mugello, Barberino, Bonifazio Uberti, Francesco Cieco, Giotto, Orcagna, Cavalcante, Boccaccio, Petrarca, Dante, Zenobi, Giovanni Andrea the "Prince of Canonists"; the three Villani, Dino Compagni, Coluccio Salutati, Sacchetti, Pandolfino, and other noted though inferior minds, such as Paulo and Bonatti in mathematics and astronomy; present altogether a constellation of such intellect as dazzles the understanding and makes us marvel how one small community could produce so much, so quickly!

The amusements of the Florentines in this century were much of the same character as the last: mysteries, tournaments, "*Armeggierie*," processions of maskers, and similar pastimes were frequent: two of these troops of mummers three hundred in each, paraded the city for a whole month in 1333, one in yellow the other in white, all crowned with garlands, and music singing and dancing as was then the custom, besides every other kind of diversion; each was led by its king who walked in state under a golden canopy and entertained all comers at a vast expense*.

Besides these there was the game of "*Calcio*," a sort of football but more scientific, which was peculiar to Florence and is supposed to have descended to them from Greece through their Roman ancestors†. The first of May was always a day of pleasure and universal festivity: songs, music, dancing and processions ushered in the spring with the festival of "*Calendimaggio*." The songs were called "*Maggi*" and "*Maggiolate*," and the "*Maio*" was a green branch decorated with flowers tinsel and ribands which was hung by lovers at the windows or near the door of their mistresses.

The festival of Twelfth-day or the Epiphany corrupted into "*Befani*" or "*Befania*" was preceded by processions carrying effigies of men and women, which were also exhibited at the

* Giov. Villani, Lib. x., cap. ccxvi.
† Discorso sopra il Gioco del Calcio, (*Firenze*, 1580.)

windows, with lights and music, and is supposed to be the remnant of older processions representing the advent of the Magi. Many other public festivals and fairs were common to the Florentines who were as eager as their Roman progenitors for amusement; but the chief of all was that of San Giovanni when tribute and homage was publicly received from every subject state. The great festival of this century was however the jubilee of 1350, which quickly aroused all Christendom to devotion: about the beginning of 1300 a report became current in Rome that whoever visited Saint Peter's at the commencement of a new century would by the act itself be entitled to a plenary indulgence, and the church was consequently thronged. This was not lost upon the subtle Boniface, perhaps devised by him, if it were not indeed a remnant of the ancient secular games gradually falling into desuetude and then only remembered by the very old. A peasant of a hundred and seven years of age was interrogated by order of the pope, who declared that he remembered his father making this visit in the year 1200 and advising him also to do so if he outlived the century: this having been confirmed by several other aged men both in France and Italy, Boniface published the jubilee of that year, but the *name* was not adopted before Clement VI. shortened the term to fifty years in imitation of the Mosaic law. The jubilee of 1350 was therefore really the first under that title; speaking of which Petrarch says in his letter to Urban V. "So vast was the multitude of pilgrims that I doubted if the largest city could have nourished them for a day, and yet it was remarked that the abundance was greater at the end than the commencement, although the fields were not cultivated and the vines had been frozen the preceding year *.

The Bull published on this occasion if genuine, which is scarcely credible, is calculated to give a good idea of the known

* De Sade, Mem., vol. iii., Lib. vi., p. 685.

grandiloquous character of this pontiff who here asserts the papal supremacy in such a manner as must have made it difficult for any sublunary monarch to hesitate acknowledging his divine authority. It is dated on the twenty-eighth of June 1344, and informs the world that the "*Sovereign Pontiff by virtue of that authority which he has received from the Apostles reëstablishes the souls of those who shall gain an indulgence, in the same state as they at first were after baptism; and he commands the angels to introduce them immediately into paradise without making them pass through purgatory*"*. Such were the fantastic tricks that Roman pontiffs played before high heaven in the fourteenth century.

* The majority of learned opinions are however said to be in favour of the Apocryphal character of this Bull. (See De Sade, vol. iii., Lib. iv., p. 85, and note.)

END OF VOL. II.

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